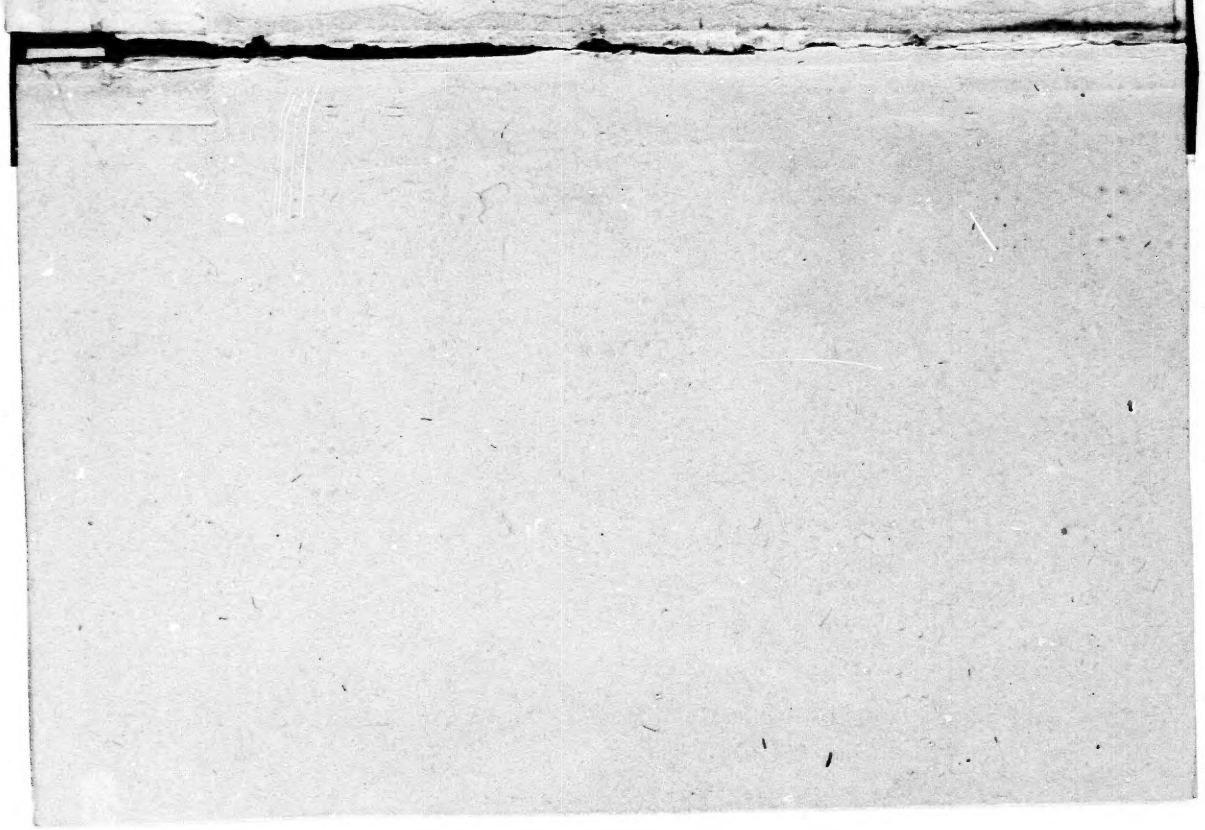

THE

EARLY JESUIT MISSIONS

IN

NORTH AMERICA;

COMPILED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE LETTERS OF THE FRENCH JESUITS, WITH NOTES.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM INGRAHAM KIP, D.D.,

Bishop of California, Honorary Member N. Y. Historical Society.

ALBANY, N. Y.:
JOEL MUNSELL, 82 STATE STREET.
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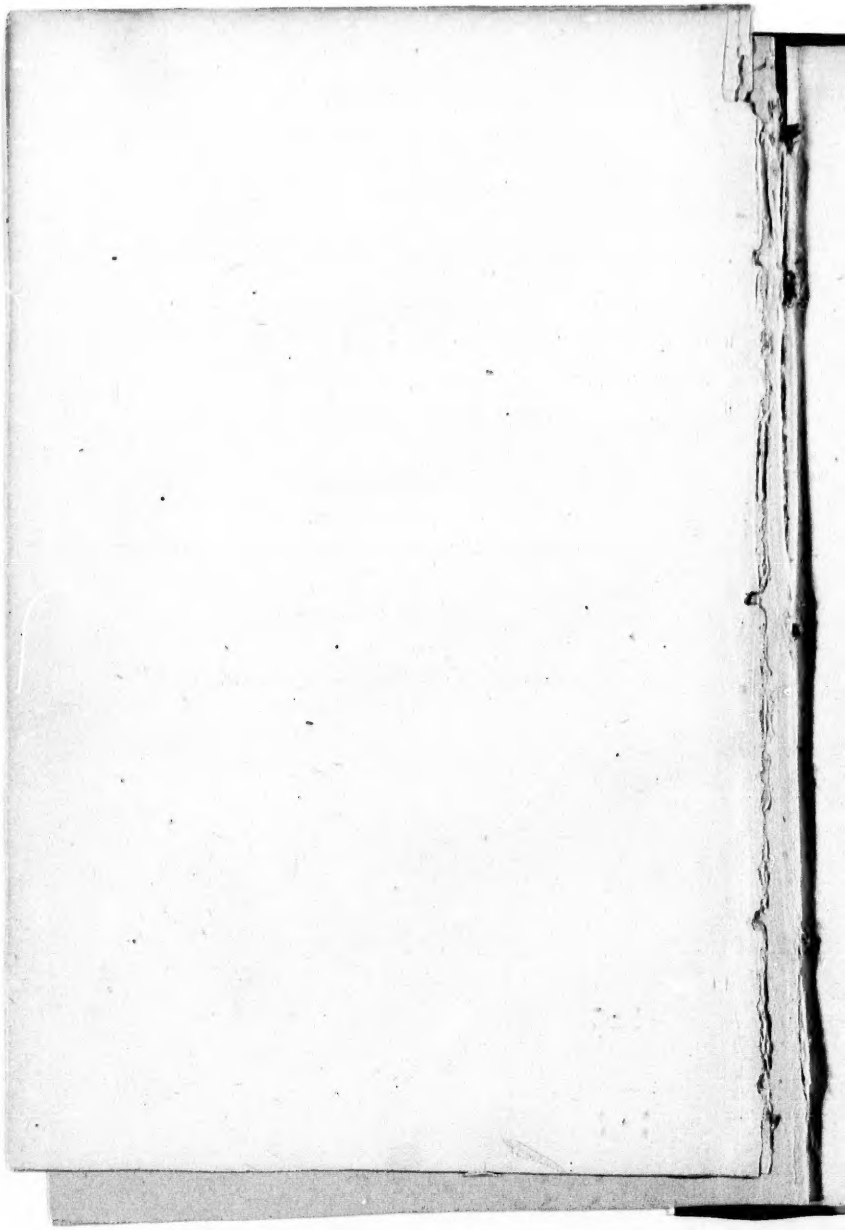

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

This work was first published in 1845. It was the first time this chapter of history had been placed before the public in this country, and it met with a hearty reception.

Having been out of print for many years, the publishers think they are performing an acceptable service to the public in issuing this new edition, with the addition of an index.

ALBANY, 1866.

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PREFACE.

There is no page of our country's history more touching and romantic, than that which records the labors and sufferings of the Jesuit Missionaries. In these western wilds they were the earliest pioneers of civilization and faith. The wild hunter or the adventurous traveller, who, penetrating the forests, came to new and strange tribes, often found that years before, the disciples of Loyola had preceded him in that wilderness. Traditions of the "Black robes" still lingered among the Indians. On some moss-grown tree they pointed out the traces of their work, and in wonder he deciphered, carved side by side on its trunk, the emblem of our salvation and the lilies of the Bourbons. Amid the snows of Hudson's Bay—among the woody islands and beautiful inlets of the St. Lawrence—by the council fires of the Hurons and the Algonquins—at the sources of the Mississippi, where, first of the white men, their eyes looked upon the Falls of St. Anthony, and then traced down the course of the bounding river, as it rushed onward to earn its title of "Father of Waters"—on the vast prairies of Illinois and Missouri—among the blue hills which hem in the salubrious dwellings of the Cherokees—and in the thick canebrakes of Louisiana—everywhere were found the members of the "Society of Jesus." Marquette, Joliet, Brebeuf, Jogues, Lallemand, Rasles, and Marest, are the names which the West should ever hold in remembrance.

But it was only by suffering and trial that these early laborers won their triumphs. Many of them too were men who had stood high in camps and courts, and could contrast their desolate state in the solitary wigwam with the refinement and affluence which had waited on their early years. But now all these were gone. Home—the love of kindred—the golden ties of relationship—all were to be forgotten by these stern and high-wrought men, and they were often to go forth into the wilderness, without an adviser on their way, save their God. Through long and sorrowful years they were obliged to "sow in tears" before they could "reap in joy." Every self-denial gathered around them which could wear upon the spirit and cause the heart to fail. Mighty forests were to be threaded on foot, and the great lakes of the West passed in the feeble bark canoe. Hunger and cold and disease were to be encountered, until nothing but the burning zeal within could keep alive the wasted and sinking frame. But worse than all were those spiritual evils which forced them to weep and pray in darkness. They had to endure the contradiction of those they came to save, who often after listening for months with apparent interest, so that the Jesuit began to hope they would soon be numbered with his converts, suddenly quitted him with cold and derisive words, and turned again to the superstitions of their tribe.

Most of them too were martyrs to their faith. It will be noticed in reading this volume, how few of their number "died the common death of all men," or slept at last in the grounds which their Church had consecrated. Some, like Jogues and du Poisson and Souel, sunk beneath the blows of the infuriated savages, and their bodies were thrown out to feed the vulture, whose shriek, as he flapped his wings above them, had been their only requiem. Others, like Brebeuf and Lallemand and Senat, died at the stake, and their ashes "flew no marble tells us whither," while the

dusky sons of the forest stood around, and mingled their wild yells of triumph with the martyrs' dying prayers. Others again, like the aged Marquette, sinking beneath years of toil, fell asleep in the wilderness, and their sorrowing companions dug their graves in the green turf, where for many years the rude forest ranger stopped to invoke their names, and bow in prayer before the cross which marked the spot.

But did these things stop the progress of the Jesuits? The sons of Loyola never retreated. The mission they founded in a tribe ended only with the extinction of the tribe itself. Their lives were made up of fearless devotedness and heroic self-sacrifice. Though sorrowing for the dead, they pressed forward at once to occupy their places, and, if needs be, share their fate. "Nothing"—wrote Father le Petit after describing the martyrdom of two of his brethren—"nothing has happened to these two excellent missionaries for which they were not prepared when they devoted themselves to the Indian Missions." If the flesh trembled, the spirit seemed never to falter. Each one indeed felt that he was "baptized for the dead," and that his own blood, poured out in the mighty forests of the West, would bring down perhaps greater blessings on those for whom he died, than he could win for them by the labors of a life. He realized that he was "appointed unto death." "Ibo, et non redibo," were the prophetic words of Father Jogues, when, for the last time, he departed to the Mohawks. When Lallemand was bound to the stake, and for seventeen hours his excruciating agonies were prolonged, his words of encouragement to his companion were, "Brother! we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." When Marquette was setting out for the sources of the Mississippi, and the friendly Indians who had known him, wished to turn him from his purpose by declaring "Those distant nations never spare the stran-

gers," the calm reply of the missionary was, "I shall gladly lay down my life for the salvation of souls." And then, the red sons of the wilderness bowed with him in prayer and before the simple cross of cedar, and among the stately groves of elm and maple which line the St. Lawrence, there rose that old chant which the aged man had been accustomed to hear in the distant Cathedrals of his own land—

"Vexilla Regis prodeunt;
Fulget Crucis mysterium."*

But how little is known of all these men! The history of their bravery and sufferings, touching as it is, has been comparatively neglected. And it is to supply in some degree this deficiency, and to give at least a specimen of what the early Jesuits endured and dared, that this volume has been prepared. It is sent forth merely as a contribution to the historical records of the country. The early Jesuit missions form indeed a page of our history which has never yet been written, and the interest which the writer has taken in them is entirely accidental. During the last year he found in a bookstore in Europe, a set of the "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses, Ecrites des Missions Etrangeres," in thirty-four volumes, scattered through which are letters from the Jesuits in our own country. There are but few copies of this work in America, and it is thus rendered inaccessible to most persons, while its size would prevent others from attempting to investigate it. It has therefore remained only as a storehouse from which some of our historians have drawn occasional facts with regard to the early discoveries in our country. Having become interested in reading it, the writer determined to

* The banners of Heaven's king advance,
The mystery of the Cross shines forth.
Bancroft's United States, vol. iii. 156

attempt a literal translation of the letters from our own part of the continent. The notes he has added throughout the work are designated by brackets. The map prefixed is a facsimile of one published by the Jesuits in 1664, and is to be found in the "Relation de ce qui s'est passé en la Nouvelle France, en l'annee 1664."

It would have been easy to have woven the history of some of these missionaries into a romantic and touching narrative, but the writer preferred allowing them to speak for themselves, and to tell their own story. It is more interesting to read the very words these earnest laborers wrote more than a century ago, when camping in the wilderness, or sharing the wigwams of the rude savage. They portray their own views and feelings. They lead us, as no one else does, into the inner and private life of our Aborigines.

Some parts of the volume contain in successive letters the entire missionary life of an individual. Such are the the first two, which give the labors of Rasles as related by himself, while the third, by Father de la Chasse, concludes the account by the narrative of his death. So again, the eighth gives the diary of Father du Poisson from the time of his arrival in New Orleans, until he reached the distant scene of his labors among the Arkansas—the ninth is his own account of his missionary field—and the tenth, by another Jesuit, tells of his martyrdom two years afterwards in the massacre by the Natchez. The fourth letter in this volume, containing the life of the Mohawk maiden whose reputation still lives in the tradition of the North, as the Geneveva of New France, shows how the faith was presented to these savages, and how they received it. The sixth gives us for the first time an account of the expedition of Montcalm, written at the time by an eye-witness, while the journeys of Father Marest over the wide prairies of

Illinois and Michigan, by their romantic interest, we think, will arrest the attention of every reader.

It has ever been through life the object of the writer, to reverence goodness wherever seen and by whatever name it may be called, and therefore he is willing to pay his tribute to the fearless devotedness of these men. His heart can respond with joy to the triumphs they won for the Cross, when the wild tribes of the West bowed to the Emblem of our common faith,* even though he differs widely from them in their theology, and feels that often, as in the case of Catherine, the superstitions and errors of their system broke a noble spirit which might otherwise have lived for years, a light in the wilderness. Yet beautiful, notwithstanding all this, was the life of the Mohawk maiden—beautiful for the faith it showed, and the stern devotion beneath which even the body was crushed,—and sweetly solemn in the ears of the Iroquois must have sounded the *Dies Iræ*, as they slowly bore her remains over the plain of the Madeleine to their last resting-place.

But let not any carry this feeling too far, or from admiration of the romance which gathers around the labors of the Jesuits, feel as if the claim of devotedness was to be confined to them alone. Our own Church has equally her *Acta Sanctorum*, and he who with an unquickened pulse can read the record of her sons who "counted not their lives dear unto themselves," must be sadly wanting

* ——"The Priest
Believed himself the fables that he taught:
Corrupt their forms, and yet those forms at least
Preserv'd a salutary faith that wrought,
Maugre the alloy, the saving end it sought.
Benevolence had gain'd such empire there,
That even superstition had been brought
An aspect of humanity to wear,
And make the weal of man its first and only care."
Southey's Tale of Paraguay, Can. iv. 10.

in a true appreciation of all that is self-denying and holy. The annals of no Church give a loftier picture of self-sacrifice than that furnished by Henry Martyn, when he abandoned the honors of academic life and exchanged his happy home at Cambridge for the solitary bungalow at Dinapore—the daily disputes with his Moonshee and Pundit—or the bitter opposition of the Mahommedans at Shiraz. And no where do we read of a nobler martyrdom than his, when he lay expiring at Tocat, without a friend to close his eyes or a sympathizing voice to address him. So too it was when Heber left the peaceful retreat of Hodnet, to suffer and die under the burning heats of India, or Selwyn in our day consecrated himself to this cause among the wild savages of New Zealand. But the time would fail us were we to speak of Buchanan, or Thomason, or Middleton, or James, or Corrie,—"these all died in the faith"—or of Wilson, and Spencer, and Broughton, and Carr, who in this generation went out to distant heathen lands, "not knowing the things which should befall them there." Many a humble Missionary indeed, who is now suffering from poverty and an unhealthy climate in our own western wilds, and whose record is written only in Heaven, is "dying daily" and enduring as true a martyrdom for the Gospel's sake, as any Jesuit whose history is given in this volume.

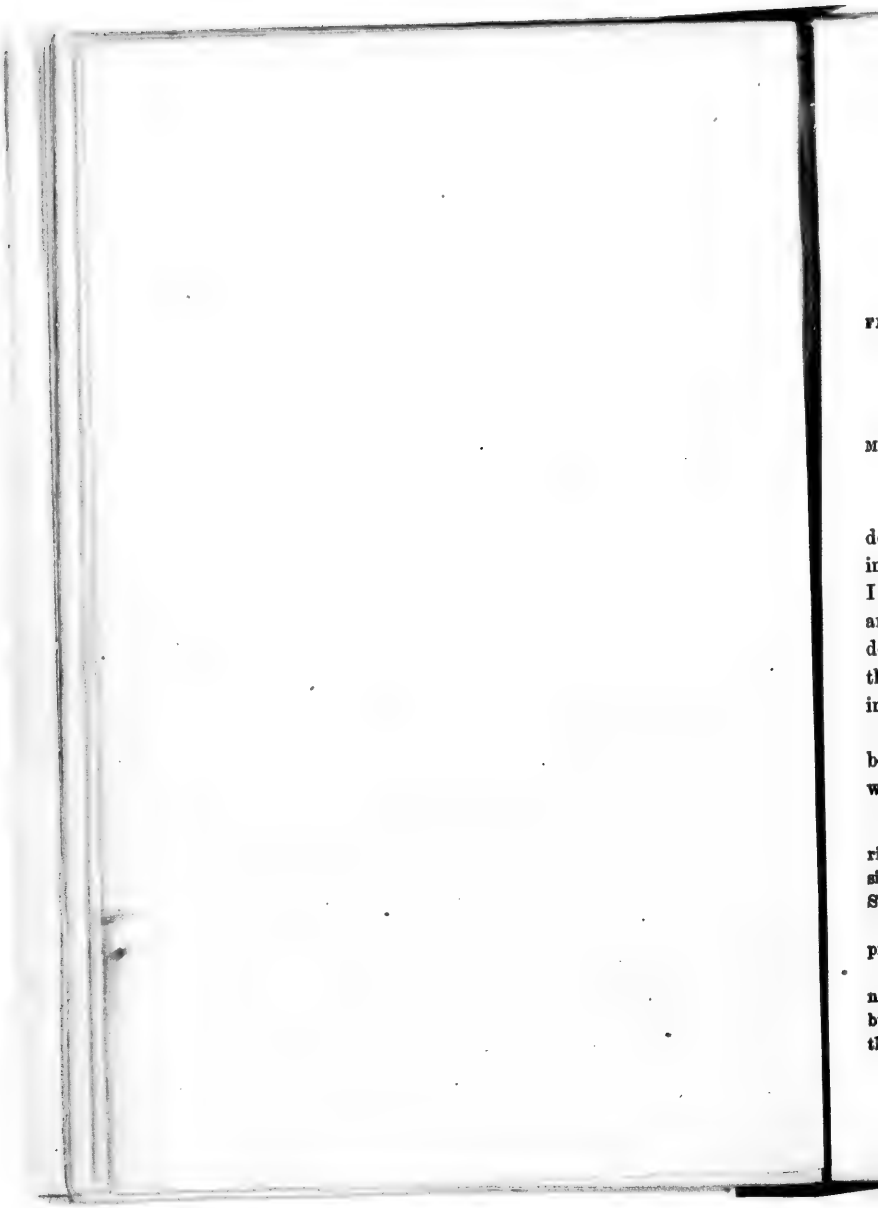
There is one thought however which has constantly occurred to us in the preparation of these letters, and which we cannot but suggest. Look over the world and read the history of the Jesuit missions. After one or two generations they have always come to naught. There is not a recorded instance of their permanency, or their spreading each generation wider and deeper, like our own missions in India. Thus it has been in China, Japan, South America, and our own land. For centuries the Jesuit foreign missionaries have been like those "beating

the air." And yet, greater devotion to the cause than theirs has never been seen since the Apostles' days. Why then was this result? If "the blood of the martyrs be the seed of the Church," why is this the only instance in which it has not proved so? Must there not have been something wrong in the whole system—some grievous errors mingled with their teaching, which thus denied them a measure of success proportioned to their efforts?

The preparation of this volume has formed the relaxation of the writer, when he wished at times to turn from the severer studies of his profession. Probably he should not have ventured to send it to the press, but for the encouragement of one, whose own publications have rendered his name well known to the students of historical research in our country, and who amidst the engrossing cares of active life, can still cultivate those scholar-like tastes and acquirements, which unfortunately are so rare among us. To him therefore the writer felt he could most appropriately inscribe this volume.

MISSIONARY LIFE AMONG THE ABNAKIS

1722.



LETTER I.

FROM FATHER SEBASTIEN RASLES,* MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN NEW FRANCE, TO MONSIEUR, HIS NEPHEW.

At Nanrantsouak,† this 15th of October, 1722.

MONSIEUR, MY DEAR NEPHEW,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

During the more than thirty years that I have passed in the depth of the forests with the Savages, I have been so occupied in instructing them, and training them to Christian virtues, that I have scarcely had time to write many letters, even to those who are most dear to me. I cannot, however refuse you the little detail of my occupations for which you ask. I owe it, indeed, to the gratitude I feel for the strong interest which your friendship induces you to take in all that concerns me.

I am in a district of that vast extent of country which is between Acadia and New England. Two other Missionaries, as well as myself, are engaged there among the *Abnakis*‡ Indians,

[* Charlevoix writes the name *Rasles*. The early New England historians spell it *Ralle*, while the missionary himself in a letter of Nov. 1712, signs it *Rale*. The latter form has been adopted by Francis in his Life. See p. 164.]

[† Now *Norridgwock* in Maine. The little Indian village was near the present site of this town, on a beautiful bend of the river.]

[‡ The meaning of this Indian word is, "Men of the East," and it was a name formerly given to all the tribes on the Eastern coast of the continent, but afterwards restricted to those inhabiting Nova Scotia, the territory of the present state of Maine, and a part of Canada. *Francis' Life of Rale*,

but we are separated very far from each other. The *Abnakis* Indians, besides the two villages which they have in the midst of the French colony, have also three other considerable settlements on the borders of a river. There are three rivers which empty into the sea, to the south of Canada, between New England and Acadia.

The village in which I live is called *Nanrantsouak*, and is situated on the banks of a river which empties into the sea, at the distance of thirty leagues below. I have erected a Church there, which is neat and elegantly ornamented. I have, indeed, thought it my duty to spare nothing either in the decoration of the building itself, or in the beauty of those articles which are used in our holy ceremonies. Vestments, chasubles, copes, and holy vessels, all are highly appropriate, and would be esteemed so even in our Churches in Europe. I have also formed a little choir of about forty young Indians, who assist at Divine Service in cassocks and surplices. They have each their own appropriate functions, as much to serve in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as to chant the Divine Offices for the consecration of the Holy Sacrament, and for the processions which they make with great crowds of Indians, who often come from a long distance to engage in these exercises; and you would be edified by the beautiful order they observe and the devotion they show.*

p. 166. In all cases through this volume the orthography of proper names has been strictly preserved, as written by the Jesuits. It is interesting sometimes to see the changes through which names have since passed.]

[*The following extract from Whittier's beautiful poem of *Mogg Megone* places before us the scene which in those days must have been witnessed on the spot:—

"On the brow of a hill, which slopes to meet
The flowing river, and bathe its feet—
The bare-washed rock, and the drooping grass,
And the creeping vine as the waters pass—
A rude and unshapely chapel stands,
Built up in that wild by unskilled hands

They have built two Chapels at three hundred paces distance from the village; the one, which is dedicated to the Holy Virgin, and where can be seen her image in relief, is above on the river; the other, which is dedicated to the Guardian Angel, is below, on the same river. As they are both on the road which leads either into the woods or into the fields, the Indians can never pass without offering up their prayers. There is a holy emulation among the females of the village, as to who shall most ornament the Chapel of which they have care, when the procession is to take place there: all who have any jewelry, or pieces of silk or calico, or other things of that kind, employ them to adorn it.

The great blaze of light contributes not a little to the beauty of the Church and of the Chapels, it not being necessary for me to be saving of the wax, for the country itself furnishes it abundantly. The islands of the sea are bordered by a kind of wild laurel which in autumn produces a berry a little like that borne by the juniper. They fill their kettles with these, and boil them with water. In proportion as the water thickens, the green wax rises to the surface, where it remains. From a measure of about

Yet the traveller knows it a place of prayer,
For the holy sign of the Cross is there;
And should he chance at that place to be,
Of a Sabbath morn, or some hallowed day,
When prayers are made and masses are said,
Some for the living, and some for the dead,—
Well might the traveller start to see
The tall dark forms, that take their way
From the birch canoe, on the river shore,
And the forest paths, to that chapel door;
And marvel to mark the naked knees
And the dusky foreheads bending these,—
And, stretching his long thin arms over these
In blessing and in prayer,
Like a shrouded spectre, pale and tall,
In his coarse white vesture, Father Rale!"]

three bushels of this berry, can be made almost four pounds of wax; it is very pure and beautiful, but neither sweet nor pliable. After several trials I have found, that by mingling with it an equal quantity of fat, either of beef or mutton, or of the elk, beautiful tapers can be made, firm, and excellent for use. With twenty-four pounds of wax and as much of fat, can be made two hundred tapers of more than a foot in length. A vast quantity of these laurels are found on the islands and on the borders of the sea, so that one person in a day can easily gather four measures, or twelve bushels of the berry. It hangs down like grapes from the branches of the tree. I have sent one branch of it to Quebec, together with a cake of the wax, and it has been found to be very excellent.

None of my neophytes fail to repair twice in each day to the Church, early in the morning to hear Mass, and in the evening to assist at the prayers, which I offer up at sunset. As it is necessary to fix the imagination of these Indians, which is too easily distracted, I have composed some appropriate prayers for them to make, to enable them to enter into the spirit of the august sacrifice of our altars. They chant them, or else recite them in a loud voice during Mass. Besides the Sermons which I deliver before them on Sundays and festival-days, I scarcely pass a week-day without making a short exhortation to inspire them with a horror of those vices to which they are most addicted, or to strengthen them in the practice of some virtue.

After the Mass, I teach the Catechism to the children and young persons, while a large number of aged people, who are present, assist and answer with perfect docility the questions which I put to them. The rest of the morning, even to mid-day, is set apart for seeing those who wish to speak with me. They come to me in crowds, to make me a participator in their pains and inquietudes, or to communicate to me causes of complaint against their countrymen, or to consult me on their marriages

and other affairs of importance. It is, therefore, necessary for me to instruct some, to console others, to re-establish peace in families at variance, to calm troubled consciences, to correct others by reprimands mingled with softness and charity; in fine, as far as it is possible, to render them all contented.

After mid-day, I visit the sick and go round among the cabins of those who require more particular instructions. If they hold a council, which is often the case with these Indians, they depute one of the principal men of the assembly to ask me to assist in their deliberations. I accordingly repair to the place where their council is held; if I think that they are pursuing a wise course, I approve of it; if, on the contrary, I have anything to say in opposition to their decision, I declare my sentiments, supporting them by weighty reasons, to which they conform. My advice always fixes their resolutions. They do not even hold their feasts without inviting me. Those who have been asked carry each one a dish, of wood or bark to the place of entertainment. I give the benediction on the food, and they place in each dish the portion which has been prepared. After this distribution has been made I say grace, and each one retires; for such is the order and usage of their feasts.

In the midst of such continual occupations, you cannot imagine with what rapidity the days pass by. There have been seasons, when I scarcely had time to recite my Office, or to take a little repose during the night; for discretion is not a virtue which particularly belongs to the Indians. But for some years past I have made it a rule, not to speak with any person from the prayers in the evening until the time of mass on the next morning. I have therefore forbidden them to interrupt me during this period, except for some very important reason, as, for example, to assist a person who is dying, or some other affair of the kind which it is impossible to put off. I set apart this time to spend in prayer, or to repose myself from the fatigues of the day.

When the Indians repair to the sea-shore, where they pass some months in hunting the ducks, bustards, and other birds, which are found there in large numbers, they build on an island a Church, which they cover with bark, and near it they erect a little cabin for my residence. I take care to transport thither a part of our ornaments, and the service is performed with the same decency and the same crowds of people as at the village.

You see then, my dear nephew, what are my occupations For that which relates to me personally I will say to you, that I neither hear, nor see, nor speak to any but the Indians. My food is very simple and light. I have never been able to conform my taste to the meat or the smoked fish of the savages, and my nourishment is only composed of corn which they pound, and of which I make each day a kind of hominy, which I boil in water. The only luxury in which I indulge is a little sugar, which I mix with it to correct its insipidity. This is never wanting in the forest. In the Spring, the maple trees contain a liquor very similar to that which is found in the sugar canes of the Southern Islands. The women employ themselves in collecting this in vessels of bark, as it is distilled from the trees. They then boil it, and draw off from it a very good sugar. That which is drawn off first is always the most beautiful.

The whole nation of the Abnakis is Christian, and very zealous to preserve their religion. This attachment to the Catholic faith, has induced them, even to this time, to prefer our alliance, to advantages which might be derived from an alliance with the English who are their neighbors. These advantages would be too of very great importance to our Indians. The facility of trading with the English, from whom they are distant but one or two days' journey, the ease with which the journey can be made, the admirable market they would find there for the purchase of the merchandise which suits them: these things certainly hold out very great inducements. In place of which, in going to

Quebec, it is necessary to take more than a fortnight to reach there, they have to furnish themselves with provisions for the journey, they have different rivers to pass, and frequent portages to make.* They are aware of these inconveniences, and are by no means indifferent to their interests, but their faith is infinitely more dear to them, and they believe that if they detach themselves from our alliance, they will shortly find themselves without a missionary, without sacraments, without a sacrifice, with scarcely any exercise of their religion, and in manifest danger of being replunged into their former heathenism. This is the bond which unites them to the French. Attempts have been vainly made to break it, sometimes by wiles which were held out to their simplicity, and sometimes by acts of violence, which could not fail to irritate a nation exceedingly jealous of its rights and liberties. The commencement of this misunderstanding could not but alarm me, for it made me fear the dispersion of that little community which Providence had for so many years confided to my care, and for the sake of which I would willingly sacrifice what remains to me of life. Let me mention to you then some of the different artifices to which the English had recourse to detach them from our alliance.

The Governor-general of New England, some years ago, sent to the lower part of the river, the most able of the ministers of Boston,† to establish there a school to instruct the children of the Indians, and maintain them at the expence of the govern-

* To make a portage is to transport their canoe and baggage from one river to another, with which it has no communication. These portages are sometimes of many leagues, and it is the principal reason which induces the Indians to use canoes of bark, since they are very light and easily transported.

[† This, as we learn from his Journal, which is still preserved in Boston, was the Rev. Joseph Baxter of Medfield, Mass. He graduated at Harvard College in 1693, and had a high reputation in the colony at that time.]

ment. As the pay of the minister was to increase in proportion to the number of scholars, he neglected nothing which could attract them. He went himself to seek them out; he caressed them; he made them little presents; he pressed them to come and see him; in fine, he gave himself the trouble of many useless manœuvres during two months, without being able to gain a single child. The contempt which they showed for his caresses and his invitations did not repulse him. He therefore addressed himself to the Indians themselves; he put to them different questions with regard to their belief, and on hearing the answers they made, he turned into ridicule the Sacraments, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, the Rosary, the Cross and Images, the lighting of our Churches, and all those practices of piety so sacredly observed in the Catholic religion.

I thought it my duty to oppose these first seeds of seduction, and therefore wrote a frank letter to the minister, in which I remarked to him, that my Christians knew how to believe the verities the Catholic faith set forth, but were not able disputants; that since they were not sufficiently learned to resolve the difficulties he had proposed, he apparently had intended they should be communicated to me, and that I therefore would avail myself with pleasure of this occasion which offered, to confer with him either orally or by letters; that with this I would send him a manuscript, which I would beg him to read with serious attention. In this manuscript, which was about a hundred pages in length, I proved from Scripture, from tradition, and from theological arguments, those truths which he had attacked with so much misplaced pleasantry. I added also, in finishing my letter, that if he was not satisfied with my proofs, I should expect from him a refutation precise and sustained by theological arguments, not by vague reasons which proved nothing, still less by injurious reflections, which were neither suited to our profession, nor to the importance of the subjects in dispute.

Two days after he had received my letter, he departed to return to Boston, sending me a short answer, which I was obliged to read over many times before I could comprehend its meaning, the style was so obscure and the Latin so extraordinary. I comprehended at last, by dint of study, that he complained I had attacked him without reason; that zeal for the salvation of their souls had led him to show the way to Heaven to these Indians, and that, for the rest, my proofs were childish and ridiculous. Having sent to him at Boston a second letter, in which I set forth his blunders,* he answered me at the end of two years, without entering into the subject in dispute, merely declaring that I exhibited a spirit jealous and critical, and which bore the marks of a temperament inclined to be choleric.† Thus terminated our dispute, which banished the minister, and obliged him to abandon the project he had formed of seducing away my neophytes.

This first attempt having met with so little success, they had recourse to another artifice. An Englishman asked permission of the Indians to build on their river a kind of storehouse, to enable him to trade with them, and he promised to sell them his goods at a much more favorable rate even than they could purchase in Boston. The Indians, who found it for their advantage, and were thus spared the trouble of a journey to Boston, willing-

[* He found fault with *amicus*, used as an adjective instead of a substantive: with *merere*, which should have been the deponent *mereri*; with *mola*, in the sense of a *mill* instead of a *millstone*; with *domus* for the accusative plural, which, the critic asserted, should be *domos*, and the like."—*Francis' Life*, p. 258.]

[† Dr. Francis says, he has seen this letter, which was in the possession of a connection of the Baxter family. It was either a copy kept by Mr. Baxter, or was sent back to him after the seizure of Rale's papers. It has now been placed among the papers of the Mass. Hist. Society. In it the writer gives a stout defence of his grammar, and then, "turns the edge of the critical knife upon Rale's own style."]

ly consented. Another Englishman, a short time afterwards, asked the same permission, offering conditions even more advantageous than the first. It was accorded to him with equal willingness. This easiness of the Indians emboldened the English to establish themselves on the whole length of the river, without even asking permission, and they built their houses there, and erected their forts, three of which were of stone.

This proximity of the English was at first a source of pleasure to the Indians, who did not perceive the snare which had been laid for them, and who only looked at the satisfaction they experienced in finding their new guests to be all they could desire. But at length, seeing themselves insensibly surrounded, as it were, by the habitations of the English, they began to open their eyes and to feel a mistrust. They demanded of the English, by what right they thus established themselves on their lands, and even erected their forts there. The answer which they received, that the King of France had ceded their country to the King of England, threw them into the greatest alarm; for there is no Indian nation but suffers most impatiently what they regard as subjection to any other power, whatever it may be; they term them indeed their allies, but nothing more. The Indians, therefore, immediately despatched some of their number to M. le Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor-general of New France, to learn whether it was true that the king had thus indeed disposed of a country of which he was not the master. It was not difficult to calm their disquietude, for it was only necessary to explain to them the articles of the treaty of Utrecht, which related to the Indians, and they appeared content.

About this time a score of Indians had one day entered the dwelling of one of the English, either for the purpose of traffic, or to repose themselves. They had been there but a short time, when they saw the house suddenly surrounded by a company of nearly two hundred armed men. "We are lost," said one of

them; "let us sell our lives dearly." They were preparing therefore to rush forth upon the company, when the English, perceiving their resolution, and knowing besides of what the savage is capable in the first burst of his fury, endeavored to appease them, assuring them that they had no evil design, and that they only came to invite some of them to return with them to Boston to confer with the Governor, on the means of cherishing the peace and good intelligence which ought to subsist between the two nations. The Indians, a little too credulous, deputed four of their countrymen who should return with them to Boston, but when they arrived there, the conference with which they were amused ended in retaining them as prisoners.

You will be surprised, without doubt, that so small a handful of Indians should have pretended to make head against so numerous a company as that of the English. But our Indians have performed an infinite number of actions which are much more hardy. I will relate to you one only, from which you may judge of the others.

During the late wars, a party of thirty Indians were returning from a hostile expedition against the English. As the Indians, and particularly the Abnakis, are entirely unacquainted with guarding against surprises, they slept at their first stopping-place, without even thinking to post a sentinel during the night. A party of six hundred English, commanded by a colonel, pursued them even to their *cabanage*,* and finding them buried in sleep, he surrounded them with his company, promising himself that not one of them should escape him. One of the Indians having awakened, and perceiving the English troops, immediately gave notice to his countrymen by crying out according to their custom, "We are lost; let us sell our lives dearly!" Their resolution

* This is the name by which the Indians call their place of encampment. When they go to war or to the chase, their first care on arriving at the place where they intend to repose, is to erect their cabins.

was very soon taken. Forming themselves instantly into six parties of five men each, with the hatchet in one hand and the knife in the other, they threw themselves on the English with so much impetuosity and fury, that after having killed more than sixty men, in which number was their colonel, they put the rest to flight.

The Abnakis were no sooner informed of the manner in which their countrymen were treated at Boston, than they complained bitterly, that in the midst of a peace which was existing, they should in this way have violated the rights of nations. The English answered, that they only retained the prisoners as hostages for an injury which had been done in killing some cattle belonging to them; and that as soon as they repaired this damage, which amounted to two hundred pounds of beaver-skins, the prisoners should be released. Although the Abnakis were not convinced of the existence of this pretended damage, yet they did not hesitate to pay the two hundred pounds of beaver, not wishing at all, for so small an affair, that any should be able to reproach them with having abandoned their brethren. Yet, notwithstanding the payment of this contested debt, they refused to set the prisoners at liberty.

The Governor of Boston, fearing lest this refusal would drive the Indians to the perpetration of some bold stroke, proposed to hold a conference for the purpose of treating this affair in a spirit of conciliation. They even agreed on the day and the place where it should be held. The Indians repaired thither with Father Rasles, their missionary. Father de la Chasse, Superior General of the Missions, who made them at this time a visit, went also; but Monsieur the Governor did not appear. The Indians drew unfavorable inferences from his absence, and took measures to acquaint him with their sentiments by means of a letter, written in their own tongue, in English, and in Latin, which Father de la Chasse, who was acquainted with these three languages, was

charged to prepare. It of course appeared useless to employ any other language but the English, yet the Father was well satisfied that it should be so, because on the one hand, the Indians would know for themselves that the letter contained nothing but what they had dictated, and on the other hand, the English would have no reason to doubt, but that the translation into their own language was a faithful one. The amount of the letter was this: 1st. That the Indians could not comprehend, why they still retained their countrymen in irons, after the promise which had been given to restore them to liberty as soon as the two hundred pounds of beaver were paid. 2d. That they were no less surprised to see that they had seized on their country without permission. 3d. That the English should leave it as soon as possible, and also release the prisoners; that they would await their answer for two months, and if after that time they should refuse to give them any satisfaction, they would then know how to obtain justice for themselves.

It was in the month of July, of the year 1721, that this letter was carried to Boston by some English who had assisted at the Conference. As the two months passed without bringing any answer from Boston, and besides, the English ceased to sell to the Abnakis powder, and lead, and provisions, as they had done before this dispute, our Indians were disposed to make reprisals. It required all the influence which the Marquis de Vaudreuil possessed over their minds, to induce them as yet for some time to suspend the violence they meditated.

But their patience was pushed to an extreme by two acts of hostility which the English perpetrated in the end of December, 1721, and in the beginning of the year 1722. The first was their carrying off M. de Saint-Casteins. This officer was a Lieutenant in our army. His mother was an Abnakis Indian, and he had always lived among the Indians, whose esteem and confidence he had won to such a degree, that they had chosen him their Com-

mander General. In this capacity he could not excuse himself from assisting at the conference of which I have spoken, where he interested himself in promoting the interests of the Abnakis, his countrymen. The English charged this on him as a crime, and despatched a small vessel to the place of his residence. The captain took care to conceal his people, with the exception of two or three men whom he left on the deck. Having invited M. de Saint-Casteins, with whom he was acquainted, to come on board and take some refreshments, the latter having no reason to distrust him accepted it and repaired thither without any attendants. But scarcely had he arrived, when they set sail and carried him off to Boston. There, they placed him on the prisoner's stand, and questioned him as a criminal. They demanded of him among other things, why, and in what capacity he had assisted at the conference which was held with the Indians; what was the meaning of the uniform which he wore; and whether he had not been sent to that assembly by the Governor of Canada. M. de Saint-Casteins answered, that he was an Abnakis on his mother's side; that his whole life had been spent among the Indians; that his countrymen having elected him chief of their nation, he was obliged to attend their councils, to sustain their interests there; that it was in this capacity only that he had assisted at the last conference; that for the rest, the dress which he wore was not at all a uniform, as they had imagined; that it was in truth appropriate and sufficiently ornamented, but not above his rank, independently even of the honor which he had to be an officer in our army.

Monsieur, our Governor, having been apprised of the detention of M. de Saint-Casteins, wrote immediately to the Governor of Boston to make his complaints to him. He did not receive any answer to his letter, but as the time drew near when the English Governor expected to receive a second one, he set the prisoner

at liberty, after having held him in confinement during five months.

An enterprise of the English against myself, was the second act of hostility which completed the work of irritating to excess the Abnakis nation. A missionary can hardly fail of being an object of hatred to these gentlemen. The love of religion, which he endeavors to engraven in the hearts of the Indians, is the most efficient means of retaining these neophytes in an alliance, and removing them from that of the English. They therefore regarded me as an invincible obstacle in the way of the design they had formed of extending themselves over the lands of the Abnakis, and thus gradually becoming masters of the region which lies between New England and Acadia. They have often endeavored to carry me off from my flock, and more than once a price has been set upon my head. It was towards the end of January in the year 1722, that they made a new attempt, which, however, had no other result than to make manifest the ill will they bore me.

I had remained alone in the village, with only a small number of old men and infirm persons, while the rest of the Indians were at the hunting-grounds. The opportunity seemed to them a favorable one to surprise me, and with this view they sent out a detachment of two hundred men.* Two young Abnakis who were engaged in the chase along the sea-shore, learned that the English had entered the river, and they immediately turned their steps in that direction to observe their progress. Having perceived them at ten leagues distance from the village, they outstripped them in traversing the country to give me warning, and to cause the old men, the females, and infants to retire in haste. I had barely time to swallow the consecrated wafers, to crowd the sacred vessels into a little chest, and to save myself in the woods. The English arrived in the evening at the village, and

[* This was Colonel Westbrook's expedition.]

not having found me, came the following morning to search for me, even in the very place to which we had retreated. They were scarcely a gun-shot distant when we perceived them, and all I could do was to hide myself with precipitation in the depths of the forest. But as I had not time to take my snow-shoes, and, besides, had considerable weakness remaining from a fall which took place some years before, when my thigh and leg were broken, it was not possible for me to fly very far. The only resource which remained to me was to conceal myself behind a tree. They began immediately to examine the different paths worn by the Indians, when they went to collect wood, and they penetrated even to within eight paces of the tree which concealed me. From this spot it would seem as if they must inevitably discover me, for the trees were stripped of their leaves; but as if they had been restrained by an invisible hand, they immediately retraced their steps, and repaired again to the village.

It is thus that, through the particular protection of God, I escaped from their hands. They pillaged my Church and humble dwelling,* and thus almost reduced me to a death by famine in the

[* Among other papers seized at this time was his *Dictionary of the Abnaki Language*, on which he had been for years employed. "The original manuscript, carefully preserved in strong binding, is now in the library of Harvard College. It is a quarto volume in Rale's own handwriting. On the first leaf is the following note, written by him in 1691. 'Il y a un an que je suis parmi les sauvages; je commence a mettre en ordre, en forme de dictionnaire, les mots que j'apprens.'.... The work is divided into two parts. The first is a dictionary of the Abnaki dialect, in French and Indian, the French word or phrase being given first, and then the corresponding Indian expression, generally, though not uniformly, in distinct columns. Two hundred and five leaves, a comparatively small part of which have writing on both sides, and the remainder on one side only, make up this part. The second part has twenty five leaves, both sides of which are generally filled with writing. It is called *Particulæ*, on account of the *particles*, the Indian words being placed first, and the explanations given in

midst of the woods. It is true, that as soon as they learned my adventure in Quebec, they immediately sent me provisions; but these could not arrive until very late, and during all that time I was obliged to live destitute of all succor and in extreme need.

These repeated insults induced the Indians to conclude, that they had no further answer to expect, and that it was time to repulse violence, and to cause open force to take the place of pacific negociations. On their return from the hunting-grounds, and after having planted their fields, they formed the resolution to destroy the habitations which the English had lately built, and to remove far from them these unquiet and troublesome guests, who were encroaching by degrees upon their lands, and who meditated bringing them entirely into subjection. They sent messengers to the different villages to interest them in their cause, and to engage their aid in the necessity they were under of making a right defence The deputation met with success. They chanted the war-song among the Hurons of Lorette, and in all the villages of the Abnakis nation. *Nanrantsouak* was the place

French or Latin. One can scarcely look at this important manuscript, with its dingy and venerable leaves, without associations of deep interest with those labors, and that life in the wilderness, of which it is now the only memorial..... The dictionary was printed in 1833, in the first volume of the new series of the Memoirs of the American Academy, under the care and direction of Mr. John Pickering, who furnished it with an introduction and notes, which enhance its value." *Francis' Life of Rale, p.* 294.

"The 'strong-box' which contained his papers and inkstand, is also preserved. It is of a curious and complicated construction. In the lower part is a secret drawer or compartment, to which one unacquainted with the manner of opening it can scarcely find access without breaking the box. On the inside of the lid are pasted two engravings, in a rude style, representing the scourging of Jesus and the crowning with thorns. The box after long continuing in the possession of Col. Westbrook's family, has been deposited by one of his descendants in the collection of the Mass. Hist. Society." *Francis' Life, p.* 299.]

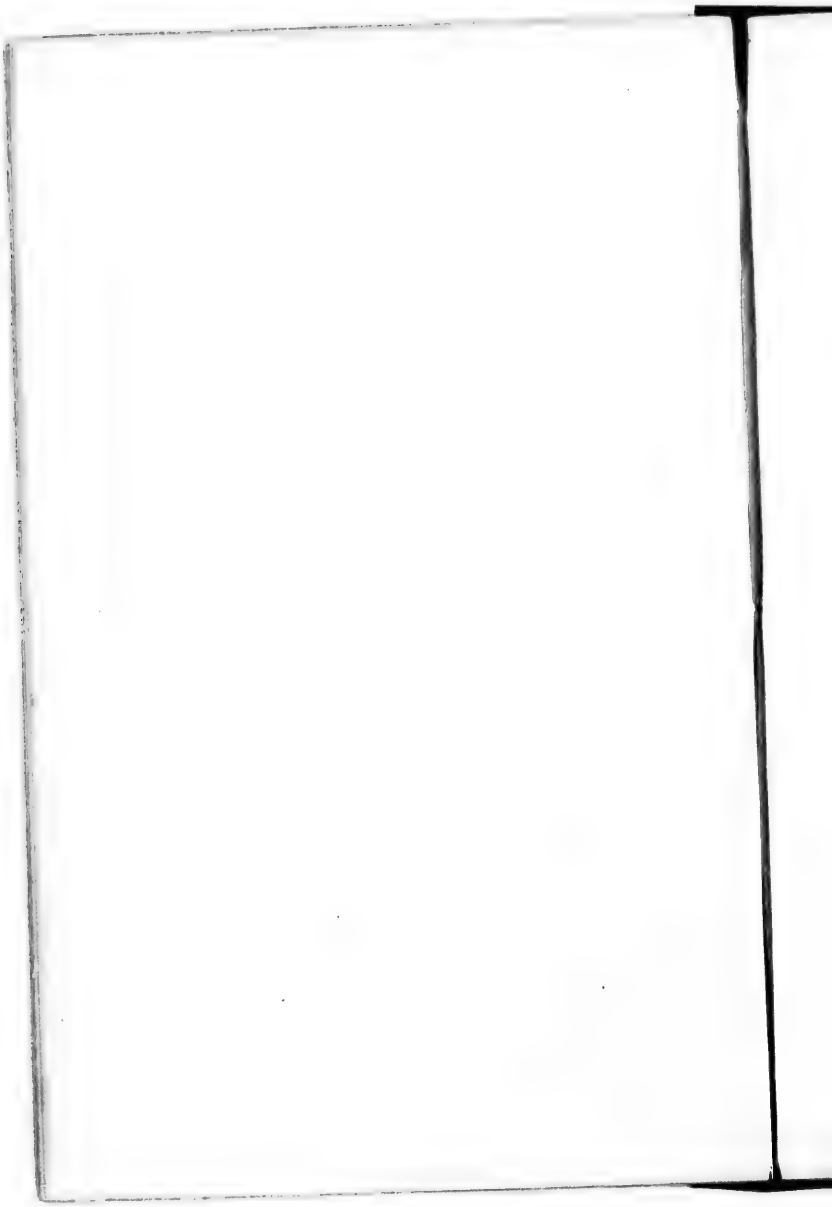
appointed for the assembling of the warriors, to settle their plans by mutual concert.

In the meanwhile the *Nanrantsouakians* descended the river, and having arrived at its mouth, they seized three or four little vessels belonging to the English. After again ascending the same river, they pillaged and burnt the new dwellings which the English had erected there. They, however, abstained from all violence towards the inhabitants, even permitting them to retire to their own people, with the exception of five whom they retained as hostages until their countrymen had been given up, who were now detained in the prisons at Boston. This moderation of the Indians, however, had not the desired effect On the contrary, a party of the English having found sixteen Abnakis asleep on an island, made a general discharge on them, by which five were killed and three wounded.

This is a new signal of the war which is about to break out between the English and the Indians. The latter do not in any way expect aid from the French, on account of the peace which exists between the two nations; but they have a resource in all the other Indian nations, who will not fail to enter into their quarrel, and to take up their defence.

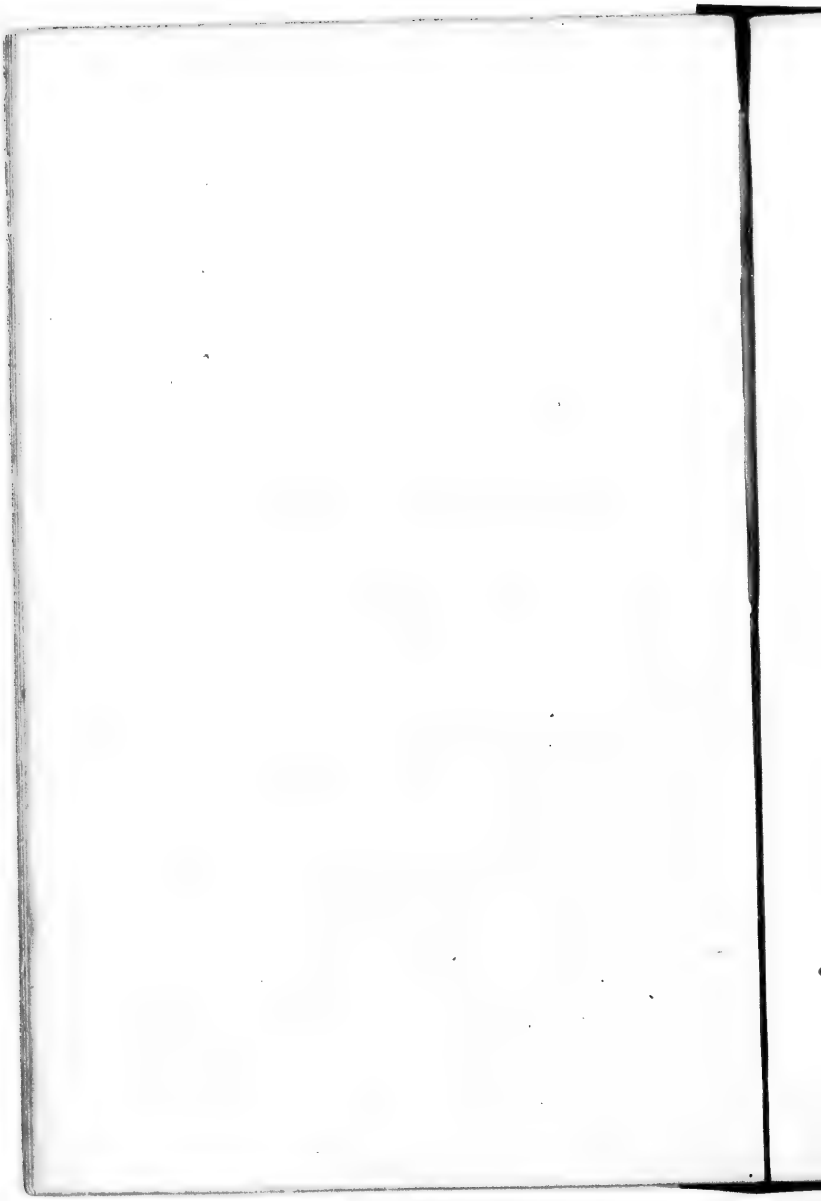
My neophytes, touched by the peril to which I found myself exposed in their village, often urged me to retire for a time to Quebec. But what will become of the flock, if it be deprived of its shepherd? They have done what they could to represent to me, that in case I should fall into the hands of our enemies, the least which could possibly happen to me would be to languish for the rest of my days in a hard prison. But I close their lips with the words of the Apostle, which divine goodness has deeply engraven on my heart. "Do not at all distress yourselves," I say to them, "as to what concerns me. I do not in the least fear the threats of those who hate me without a cause, 'and I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course,

and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.'" Pray for me, my dear nephew, that He will strengthen in me those sentiments which can have their origin only from His mercy, to the end that I may have power to live and die without ceasing to labor for the salvation of these neglected souls, who are the price of His blood, and whom he condescended to commit to my care.



THE WANDERINGS OF FATHER RASLES.

1689—1723.



LETTER II.

FROM FATHER SEBASTIEN RASLES, MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN NEW FRANCE, TO MONSIEUR HIS BROTHER.

At Nanrantsouak, this 12th of October, 1723.

MONSIEUR, MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

I CANNOT longer resist the kind entreaties which you make in your letters, that I would inform you a little in detail with regard to my occupations, and the character of the Indian tribes among which Providence has for so many years cast my lot. I do so the more willingly, because I know that in conforming to desires so urgent on your part, I shall gratify your affection even more than your curiosity.

It was on the 23d of July in the year 1689, that I embarked at Rochelle, and after a pleasant voyage of three months, arrived at Quebec on the 13th of October in the same year. I at once applied myself to learn the language of our Indians. Their language is indeed very difficult, for it is not sufficient to study its terms and their signification, or to make a collection of words and phrases; it is necessary also to know the idiomatic turns and arrangements which the Indians give them, which it is scarcely possible to acquire except by intercourse and frequent association with these people.

I then went to live in a village of the Abnakis nation, situated in a forest which is but three leagues from Quebec. This village was inhabited by two hundred Indians, almost all of whom were

Christians. Their cabins were arranged nearly like the houses in a town, while around them was an enclosure of stakes high and thick, forming a kind of wall, which they had constructed to protect them from the incursions of their enemies.

Their cabins are easily built. They plant poles in the earth, which they join at the top, and then cover them with large pieces of bark. The fire they make in the middle of the cabin, and all around it they place mats formed of reeds, on which they sit during the day, and sleep at night.

The dress of the men consists of a loose robe of skin, or else of a piece of red or blue cloth. That of the women is one covering, which hangs from the neck to the middle of the leg, and which they arrange with a great deal of propriety. They place another covering on the head, which descends even to their feet, and serves them for a cloak. Their stockings extend only from the knee to the ankle. Moccasins made of the skin of deer and lined in the inside with hair or wool, serve them in place of shoes. This moccasin is absolutely necessary to enable them to wear their snow-shoes, by means of which they walk with ease on the snow. These snow-shoes, made in the shape of a lozenge, are more than two feet in length, and one and a half in breadth. I did not think that I should ever be able to walk with such machines; but when I made the attempt, I found myself immediately so expert, that the Indians could not believe it was the first time I had used them.

The invention of these snow-shoes is of great use to the Indians, not only to enable them to run on the snow, with which the earth is covered the greater part of the year, but also to go in pursuit of game, and particularly of the elks. These animals, which are larger than the largest bullocks of France, can walk with difficulty through the snow. It is thus easy for the Indians to come up with them, and they often kill them with only a knife attached to the end of a stick. They feed on their flesh, and

after having well-dressed their skins, in which they are very skilful, they use them as articles of traffic with the French and English. From them they receive in exchange, their cloth dresses and blankets, their kettles, their guns, their hatchets and knives.

To give you an idea of an Indian, imagine to yourself a large man, powerful, active, of a swarthy complexion, without beard, with black hair, and his teeth whiter than ivory. If you wish to see him in all his finery, you will find that he has no other ornaments but beads; these are a kind of shell or stone, which they form into the shape of little grains, some white and others black, which they string together in such a way as to represent different showy figures with great exactness. It is with these beads that our Indians bind up and plat their hair on their ears and behind; they make of them pendents for the ears, collars, garters, large sashes of five or six inches in breadth, and on these kinds of ornaments they pride themselves much more than a European would on all his gold and jewelry.

The occupation of the men is in the chase or in war; that of the women is to remain in the village, and to manufacture there with bark baskets, sacks, boxes, dishes, platters, &c. They sew the bark with fibres of roots, and in this way make various articles for household use, very admirably constructed. Their canoes are made in like manner of bark alone, but the largest can scarcely contain more than six or seven persons.

It is with these canoes made of bark, which is scarcely thicker than a crown piece, that they cross the arms of the sea, and navigate the most dangerous rivers and lakes four or five hundred leagues around. I have thus made many voyages without having run any risk. On one single occasion only, it happened that in crossing the river St. Lawrence, I suddenly found myself surrounded by heaps of ice of enormous magnitude, among which the canoe was wedged. The two Indians who conducted me at

once cried out, "We are lost; it is all over; we must perish." Nevertheless, making an effort, they leaped on one of the cakes of floating ice. I followed their example, and after having drawn up the canoe, we carried it to the extremity of this piece of ice. There it was necessary again to embark in the canoe for the purpose of gaining another cake of ice; and thus, by leaping from cake to cake, we at length reached the bank of the river, without any other inconvenience than that of being very wet and benumbed with the cold.

Nothing can equal the tenderness which the Indians exhibit towards their children. As soon as they are born, they place them on a little piece of board, covered with cloth and a small bear-skin, in which they wrap them, and this is their cradle. Their mothers carry them on their backs, in a manner convenient both for the infants and themselves.

No sooner have the children begun to walk, than they exercise them in using the bow, and in this they become so skilful that at ten or twelve years of age they scarcely ever fail to kill the bird at which they aim. I was very much surprised, and should have had difficulty in believing it, if I had not myself been a witness of their skill.

That which was most revolting to me when I commenced living with the Indians was, the necessity of taking my meals with them. Nothing could be more disgusting. After having filled their kettle with victuals, they place it on to boil for about three quarters of an hour, after which they take it off the fire, and serve it up on dishes of bark, dividing it among all those who are in the cabin. Each one then eats his food as he would a piece of bread. This sight did not give me much appetite, and they soon perceived my repugnance. "Why do you not eat?" they asked me. I answered, that I was not accustomed to eat my food thus, without adding to it a little piece of bread. "It is necessary for you to overcome this," said they. "Is it so difficult for a Father who

understands Prayer* perfectly? We, on our part, have difficulties to get over, in order to have faith in what we cannot see." There was then no room for hesitation, for it was necessary to conform to their manners and customs, to the end that I might gain their confidence and win them to Jesus Christ.

Their meals are not regular, as is the European custom, for they live from hand to mouth. As long as they have anything with which to make a good entertainment, they avail themselves of it, without giving themselves any concern as to how they shall live on the following days.

They are passionately fond of tobacco. Men, women, and children smoke almost incessantly. The gift of a small piece of tobacco confers more pleasure upon them than the present of their weight in gold.

In the commencement of June, and when the snow is almost all melted, they plant the *skamgnar*, which is the name by which they call the Turkish or Indian corn. Their way of planting it is, to make with their fingers, or with a small stick, different holes in the earth, and to throw in each eight or nine grains, which they cover with the same earth that they have taken out to make the hole. Their harvest takes place in the end of August.

It is among these people, who are esteemed to be less barbarous than all the rest of the Indians, that I passed my novitiate as a missionary. My first occupation was to learn their language, which is very difficult to acquire, particularly when one has no other instructors than the Indians themselves. They have many guttural sounds which are only uttered with the throat, without making any movement with the lips. *Ou*, for example, is of this number, and therefore in writing it, we mark it by the character 8, to distinguish it from other sounds. I passed one part of the

[*It will be remembered that by the *Prayer*, they mean Christianity or the faith generally. This explanation will be found some pages further on in this same letter.]

day in their cabins hearing them talk; and it was necessary for me to pay the most particular attention, to combine what they said, and conjecture its signification. Sometimes I guessed rightly, but most often I failed, because, not being at all accustomed to the management of their guttural sounds, I only repeated a part of the word, and thus furnished them with occasion for laughter.

At last, after five months of constant application, I had advanced so far as to understand their terms, but this was not sufficient to enable me to express myself according to their taste; much, therefore, remained for me to do, to acquire the turn and genius of the language, which is entirely different from the turn and genius of our languages in Europe. To shorten the time, and place myself more in a state to exercise my functions, I made choice of some Indians who had the most mind, and who spoke best. I told them in my imperfect way some articles of the Catechism, and they rendered them for me into all the niceties of their language. I immediately committed them to paper, and by this means in a very short time I made for myself a dictionary, and a catechism which contained the principles and mysteries of our religion.

It cannot be denied that the language of the Indians has its real beauties, and a certain indescribable energy in the turn and manner of expression. I will give you an example of this. If I should ask *you*, Why God has created you? You would answer me, That I might know him, love him, and serve him, and by this means procure eternal glory. But should I put the same question to an Indian, he would answer in this way, according to their manner of expression: Thus thought the Great Spirit concerning us; Let them know me, let them honor me, let them love me, and obey me; that then I may cause them to enter into my wonderful felicity. If I wish to say in their style, that you will find difficulty in learning the Indian language, see how it will be

necessary for me to express myself: I think of my dear brother, that he will find difficulty in learning the Indian language.

The Huron is the chief language of these Indians, and when one has acquired it, in less than three months he will be able to understand that of the five Iroquois nations. It is the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult of all the Indian languages. This difficulty arises not only from their guttural letters, but much more from the difference of accent; for often two words composed of the same letters have entirely different significations. Father Chaumont, who has lived fifty years among the Hurons, has composed a grammar which is very useful to those who have newly arrived in this mission. Nevertheless, a missionary is fortunate, if even with this aid, he is able, after ten years of constant toil, to express himself elegantly in their language.

Each Indian nation has its own particular language. Thus, the Abnakis, the Hurons, the Iroquois, the Algonkins, the Illinois, the Miamis, &c., have each their language. There are no books at all with which to learn these languages, and if there were, they would be almost useless; practice is the only master which can instruct us. As I have labored in four different missions of the Indians; that is to say, among the Abnakis, the Algonkins, the Hurons, and the Illinois, and have been obliged to acquire their different languages, I will give you a specimen, that you may know how little resemblance there is between them. I have chosen the strophe of a hymn of the Holy Sacrament, which they ordinarily chant during the mass, at the elevation of the Host, and which begins with these words: "O salutaris Hostia." Here follows the translation in verse of this strophe in the four languages of these different nations.

In the Abnakis Language.

Kighist ɔi-nuanurɔinns
Spem kik papili go ii damek

Nemeani ꝺi kꝺidan ghabenk
Taha ꝺali grihine.

In the Algonkin Language.

Kꝺerais Jesus tegꝺenam
Nera ꝺeul ka stisian
Ka rio vllighe miang
Vas mama vik umong.

In the Huron Language.

Jesus ꝺto etti x'ichie
8to etti skuaalichi-axe
J chierche axera-ꝺensta
D'aotierti xeata-ꝺien.

In the Illinois Language.

Pekiziane manet ꝺe
Piaro nile hi nanghi
Keninama ꝺi ꝺ kangha
Mero ꝺinang ꝺsiang hi.

The meaning of these lines is this: "O saving Sacrifice, who art continually offered, and who givest life, thou by whom we enter Heaven, we are constantly assailed, O strengthen us!"

After having lived nearly two years among the Abnakis, I was recalled by my superiors. They destined me to the mission among the Illinois, who had lost their missionary. I repaired, therefore, to Quebec, where, after having spent three months in studying the Algonkin language, I embarked on the 13th of August in a canoe, to go to the Illinois, whose country is more than eight hundred leagues distance from Quebec. You can easily imagine, that so long a voyage in these barbarous regions, was not performed without running great risks and suffering many inconveniences. I had to traverse lakes of a vast extent, and where storms are as frequent as on the ocean. It is true that

we had the advantage of landing every evening, but he was fortunate who could find some flat rock on which to pass the night. When it rained, our only way of protection against it was, by placing ourselves under the canoe turned bottom upwards.

The greatest dangers, however, are to be encountered on the rivers, particularly in places where they run with great rapidity. There the canoe flies like an arrow, and if it comes in contact with any of the rocks which are found there in great numbers, it is at once dashed into a thousand pieces. This misfortune happened to some of those who accompanied us in other canoes, and it was by a singular protection of Divine Goodness, that I escaped the same fate, for my canoe many times touched the rocks, but without receiving the least injury.

We risk too the endurance of all that is most distressing in hunger, for the length and difficulty of this kind of voyage does not permit us to carry anything but a sack of Indian corn. One would naturally suppose, that the chase might furnish us on the route with something we could live on, but if the game fails we find ourselves exposed to many days of fasting. Then, the only resource is to search for a kind of leaves which the Indians call *Kengnessanach*, and the French *Tripe de roche*. One would take them for *chervil*,* which they much resemble in shape, if they were not too large. They are prepared either by boiling or roasting, and those of which I have eaten are by no means unpalatable.

I was not obliged to suffer much from hunger until I reached the Lake of the Hurons; but this was by no means the case with the companions of my voyage, for the storms having scattered

[* The *tripe de roche*, or rock-tripe, is one of the Lichens known in botanyas the *Umbilicaria Muhlenbergii*, and is much used for food by the Northern Indians. The *chervil* is the *Scandix cerefolium* of botanists, possessing a slightly aromatic taste, and much used in the South of Europe in soups and salads. *Francis' Life of Rale*, p. 175]

their canoes, they were not able to join me. I arrived therefore first at *Missilimakinak*, from whence I sent them some provisions, without which they would have starved to death. They had passed seven days without any other nourishment than what they could get from a crow which they had killed more by accident than skill, for they had not strength to hold themselves up.

The season was too far advanced to continue my route to the Illinois, from whence I was distant as yet about four hundred leagues. It was therefore necessary for me to remain at *Missilimakinak*, where there were two of our missionaries, one of whom was stationed among the Hurons, and the other among the *Outaouacks*. These last are very superstitious, and very much attached to the juggleries of their medicine-men. They claim an origin equally senseless and ridiculous, pretending that they are derived from three families, and that each family was composed of five hundred persons.

Some are from the family of *Michabou*, that is to say, of the Great Hare. They pretend that the Great Hare was a man of prodigious size; that he could spread nets in the water at eighteen fathoms deep, while the water scarcely came to his arm-pits; that one day during the deluge, he sent out the beaver to discover land, but this animal not having returned, he caused the otter to go out, who brought back a little earth covered with foam; that he repaired to the part of the lake where he found this land, which formed a little island; he walked in the water all around it, and this island became extraordinarily large. It is for this reason that they attribute to him the creation of land. They add, that after having accomplished this work, he flew up to Heaven, which is his ordinary residence, but after having left the earth, he ordered that when his descendants die, they shall burn their bodies, and then fling their ashes into the air, to the end that they may be able to raise themselves more easily towards Heaven; that if they should fail to do so, the snow would not cease

to cover the earth, their lakes and rivers would remain frozen, and not being able to catch fish, which is their ordinary food, they would all die in the spring.

It happened indeed a few years since, that the winter having continued much longer than usual, there was one general consternation among the Indians of the family of the Great Hare. They had recourse to their accustomed juggleries, and assembled many times to consult on the means of dissipating this hostile snow, which seemed obstinately determined to remain on the earth, when an old woman approached them. "My children," said she, "you have no wisdom. You know the orders which were left by the Great Hare, that we should burn dead bodies, and cast their ashes to the wind, that they might return more easily to Heaven their country; but you have neglected these orders, in leaving at some days journey from hence, a dead man without burning him, as if he did not belong to the family of the Great Hare. Repair your fault forthwith, and take measures to burn him, if you wish the snow to melt." "You are right, our mother," they answered; "you have more wisdom than we, and the counsel which you give restores us to life." They immediately deputed twenty-five men to go and burn that body. About a fortnight was spent in the journey, during which time the thaw came, and the snow melted. The old woman who had given this advice was overwhelmed with praises and presents, and this occurrence, which was so entirely natural, had a great influence in strengthening them in their folly and superstitious credulity.

The second family of the *Outaouaks* claims to be derived from *Namepich*, that is to say, the Carp. Their tradition is, that a carp having deposited its eggs on the borders of a river, and the sun having darted its rays upon them, they were formed into a woman, from whom they are descended: in this way they say they are of the family of the Carp.

The third family of the *Outaouaks* attributes its origin to the

paw of a *Machova*, that is to say, of a Bear, and they claim that they are of the family of the Bear, but without explaining in what manner they are derived. When they kill any of these animals, they make a feast for him with his own flesh—they speak to him and harangue him. "Do not have any ill will against us," they say to him, "because we have killed you. You have sense—you see that our children are suffering with hunger—they love you—they wish to make you enter into their bodies. And is it not a glorious thing for you to be eaten by the children of the Chief?"

The family of the Great Hare is the only one which burns the bodies of the dead; the other two families inter them. When any chief dies, they prepare a vast coffin, in which after having placed the body clothed in its most beautiful garments, they shut up with it his blanket, his gun, his supply of powder and lead, his bow and arrows, his kettle, his platter with some provisions, his tomahawk and pipe, his box of vermillion, his mirror, his collars of porcelain, and all the presents which were made him at his death according to their usual custom. They imagine that with this outfit he will make his journey to the other world more happily, and will meet with a more favorable reception from the great chiefs of the nation, who will conduct him to a place of enjoyment.

While all things are preparing in the coffin, the relatives of the deceased assist at the ceremony, mourning after their fashion, that is, chanting in a sorrowful tone, and beating time with a stick to which they have attached many little rattles.

The particular in which the superstition of these people appears the most extravagant, is in the worship which they bestow upon what they call their *Manitou*. As they are scarcely acquainted with anything but the animals in whose company they live in the forests, they imagine that in these animals, or rather in their skins, or in the plumage of the birds, resides a kind of

Spirit which governs all things, and which is master of life and death. There are, according to them, *Manitous* common to the whole nation, and also particular ones for each individual. *Oussakita*, they say, is the grand *Manitou* of all the animals which exist on the earth, and of the birds which fly in the air. It is he who governs them. When therefore they wish to go to the chase, they offer him tobacco, powder, lead, and skins well dressed, which they attach to the end of a pole and elevate in the air. "*Oussakita*," say they, "we give you something to smoke, and we offer you something wherewith to kill the game. Condescend to accept our presents, and do not permit them to escape our arrows. Permit us to kill them in great numbers, and very fat, so that our children may want neither clothing or nourishment."

They call *Michibichi* the *Manitou* of waters and fish, and offer him a sacrifice nearly similar when they wish to engage in fishing, or to undertake a voyage. It consists in casting into the water tobacco, provisions, kettles, and praying to him that the waters of the river may flow smoothly, that the rocks may not break their canoes, and that he will grant them an abundant supply of fish.

Besides these common *Manitous*, each one has his own particular one, which is a bear, or a beaver, or a bustard, or any animal of the kind. They carry the skin of this animal to war, or to the chase, and in their voyages, persuading themselves that it will preserve them from all danger, and ensure them success in their enterprises.

When an Indian wishes to select a *Manitou* for himself, the first animal which presents itself to his imagination during sleep, is usually that on which his choice falls. He therefore kills an animal of that kind, and places its skin, or its plumage if it be a bird, in an honorable place in his cabin. He then prepares a feast in its honor, during which he makes it a speech

in the most respectful terms, after which it is recognized as his *Manitou*.

As soon as the Spring came, I departed from *Missilimakinak* to go to the residence of the Illinois. I found in my route many Indian nations, among whom were the *Maskoutings*, the *Jakis*, the *Omekoues*, the *Iripegouans*, the *Outagamis*, &c. Each of these nations has its own peculiar language, but in other respects they do not differ at all from the *Outaouacks*. A missionary who resides at the bay of the Puants, makes from time to time excursions among these Indians, to instruct them in the truths of religion.

After forty days' journey, I entered the river of the Illinois, and having followed its course for fifty leagues, I arrived at their first village, which contained three hundred cabins, all of four or five fires. One fire is always for two families. They have eleven villages in their nation. On the day after my arrival I was invited by the principal chief to a great feast, which he gave to the most considerable persons in the nation. To prepare for it he had caused them to kill a large number of dogs; an entertainment of this kind passes among the Indians for a most magnificent festival, and is therefore called the Feast of the Chiefs. The ceremonies observed are the same among all these nations. It is generally in feasts of this kind that the Indians deliberate on all their most important affairs, as for example, when the question in agitation is, whether they shall undertake a war against their neighbors, or whether they shall terminate it by propositions of peace.

When all the guests have arrived, they range themselves around the cabin, sitting either on the bare ground or on the mats, then the chief rises and begins his harangue. I confess to you that I have admired his flow of words, the justice and force of the reasons which he advanced, the eloquent turn which he gave them, the choice and delicacy of the expressions with which

he adorned his discourse. I believe that if I could commit to writing what this Indian said to us extemporaneously and without preparation, you would be convinced without difficulty, that the most able Europeans, after much meditation and study, could scarcely compose a discourse more solid and better turned.

The harangue finished, two Indians, who filled the office of carvers, distributed the plates to all the assembly, and each plate was appropriated to two guests. They eat, conversing together on indifferent subjects, and when the repast was finished they retired, carrying with them, according to their custom, what remained on their plates.

The Illinois never give those feasts which are customary among many other savage nations, where one is obliged to eat all that is served to him, even if he should die. When therefore any one finds himself unable to fulfil this ridiculous rule, he addresses some other guest whom he knows to have a better appetite: "My brother," he says to him, "have pity on me, I shall die if you do not save my life. Eat what remains to me, and I will make you a present of something." This is the only way of getting out of the dilemma.*

The Illinois only cover themselves about the waist, and leave the rest of the body entirely naked. Different compartments filled with all kinds of figures which they engrave on their bodies in a way which is ineffaceable, supply to them the place of garments. It is only in the visits which they make, or when they assist at church, that they wrap themselves in a covering, which during the summer is composed of a skin dressed, and during the winter of a skin with the hair on, the better to retain the heat. They ornament their heads with feathers of different colors, of which they make garlands and crowns, which they arrange with great

[*This custom is in force to this day among some of our Western Indians. See an amusing account of such a feast among the Pawnees, related by the Hon. C. A. Murray, in his "Travels in North America," v. i. pp. 238—242.]

taste. They take care always to paint their faces with various colors, but particularly with vermilion. They also use collars and pendants for the ears of small stones which they cut into the shape of precious stones; some of them are blue, others red, and others white as alabaster. To these it is always necessary to add a small piece of porcelain, which hangs at the end of the collar. The Illinois persuade themselves that these fantastic ornaments confer on them a degree of grace and attract respect.

When the Illinois are not engaged in war or the chase, their time is passed in sports, or feasting, or dancing. They have two kinds of dances: the one kind is used as a token of rejoicing, and they invite to it the women and young girls who are most distinguished. The other kind is to mark their grief at the death of the most considerable persons in their nation. It is by these dances that they pretend to honor the deceased, and to dry the tears of his relatives. All persons indeed have a right to this kind of mourning at the death of their relations, provided they make presents for this purpose. The dances last a greater or less time in proportion to the price and value of the presents, which are immediately afterwards distributed to the dancers. Their custom is not to bury the dead, but they wrap them in skins and attach them by the head and feet to the tops of trees.

When not engaged in games or feasts or dances, the men remain quiet on their mats, and pass their time either in sleeping, or in making bows, arrows, calumets, and other things of the same kind. As to the women, they toil like slaves from morning till night. It is their duty during the summer to cultivate the earth and plant the Indian corn; and from the commencement of winter they are occupied in manufacturing mats, dressing skins, and many other works of the kind, for their first care is to provide every thing that is necessary for their cabin.

Of all the nations of Canada, there are none who live in so

great abundance of everything as the Illinois. Their rivers are covered with swans, bustards, ducks, and teals. One can scarcely travel a league without finding a prodigious multitude of turkeys, who keep together in flocks, often to the number of two hundred. They are much larger than those we seen in France. I had the curiosity to weigh one, which I found to be thirty-six pounds. They have hanging from the neck a kind of tuft of hair, half a foot in length.

Bears and stags are found there in very great numbers, and buffaloes and roebucks are also seen in vast herds. Not a year passes but they kill more than a thousand roebucks and more than two thousand buffaloes. From four to five thousand of the latter can often be seen at one view, grazing on the prairies. They have a hump on the back and an exceedingly large head. The hair, except that on the head, is curled, and soft as wool. The flesh has naturally a salt taste, and is so light, that although eaten entirely raw, it does not cause the least indigestion. When they have killed a buffalo which appears to them too lean, they content themselves with taking the tongue, and going in search of one which is fatter.

Arrows are the principal arms which they use in war and in the chase. They are pointed at the end with a stone cut and sharpened in the shape of a serpent's tongue; and if no knife is at hand, they use them also to skin the animals they have killed. They are so skillful in using the bow, that they scarcely ever fail in their aim, and they do it with so much quickness that they can discharge a hundred arrows in the time another person would use in loading his gun.

They will not take the trouble to labor with the proper nets for fishing in the rivers, because the abundance of animals of all kinds which are found for their subsistence, renders them indifferent to fish. But when they take a fancy to have some, they embark in a canoe with their bows and arrows; standing upright,

for the purpose of more easily seeing the fish, as soon as they perceive it, they pierce it with an arrow.

The only method among the Illinois of acquiring public esteem and veneration, is, as is the case with all other savages, to gain the reputation of an able hunter, or much more of a good warrior. It is in this particular that they principally consider merit to consist, and one who possesses it they look upon as being truly a man. They are so passionately attached to this kind of glory, that they do not hesitate to undertake journeys of four hundred leagues through the depth of the forest, either to capture a slave or to take the scalp of an enemy they have killed. They count as nothing the fatigues and long fasts they have to endure, particularly when they approach the territory of their enemies; for then they do not dare to hunt, lest the animals, being only wounded, should escape with the arrow in their bodies, and thus warn the enemy to place himself in a state of defence. Their manner of making war, the same as among all savage nations, is to surprise their foes, and they therefore are accustomed to send on scouts, to observe their number and the direction of their march, or to examine if they are on their guard. According to the report which these bring back, they either place an ambush or make an irruption into their cabins, tomahawk in hand, and do not fail to kill some of them before they have it in their power to think of defence.

The tomahawk is made of the horn of a stag, or of wood in the shape of a cutlass, and terminated by a large ball. They hold the tomahawk in one hand and a knife in the other. As soon as they have dealt a blow on the head of an enemy, they immediately cut it round with the knife, and take off the scalp with extraordinary rapidity.

When a warrior returns to his own country loaded with many scalps, he is received with great honors; but he covers himself with glory when he has made prisoners and brought them with

him alive. As soon as he arrives, all the people of the village assemble and range themselves in line on the road which the prisoners have to pass. This reception is most cruel; some tear out the nails, others cut off the fingers or the ears, while others again deal blows with their clubs.

After this first reception, the old men assemble to deliberate whether they shall grant the prisoners their lives, or put them to death. When any dead person is to be revived, that is to say, if any one of their warriors has been killed, whom they conclude ought to be replaced in his cabin, they give to this cabin one of their prisoners, who is to take the place of the deceased; and this is what they call reviving the dead.

When the prisoner is condemned to death, they immediately plant a large post in the earth, to which they attach him by both hands. They make him sing his death-song, and all the savages having seated themselves about the stake, they kindle at some feet from it a large fire, in which they heat hatchets, and gun-barrels, and other instruments of iron. Then they come forward, one after the other, and apply these things red hot to the different parts of his body. Some scorch him with burning fire-brands; others gash his body with their knives; and others cut off a piece of his flesh which has been already roasted, and eat it in his presence. You will see one fill his wounds with powder, and rub it over his whole body, and afterwards apply the fire to it. In fine, each one torments him according to his caprice, and this during four or five hours, and sometimes even for two or three days. The more shrill and piercing the cries which the violence of the torments wrings from him, so much more diverting and agreeable to these barbarians does the spectacle become. It was the Iroquois who invented this frightful kind of death, and it is only by way of retaliation that the Illinois, in their turn, treat their Iroquois prisoners with the same cruelty.

What we understand by the word *Christianity*, is known among

all the savages by the name of *Prayer*. When, therefore, I shall tell you in the remainder of this letter that such an Indian tribe has embraced Prayer, it is the same as saying that it has become Christian, or that it is disposed to be so. There would have been less difficulty in converting the Illinois, if the Prayer had permitted polygamy among them. They acknowledged that the Prayer was good, and were delighted that we should teach it to their women and children; but when we spoke on the subject to themselves, we found how difficult it was to fix their natural inconstancy, and induce them to resolve that they would have but one wife, and retain her always.

When the hour arrives for morning and evening prayers, all repair to the Chapel. There are none among them, even including their great medicine-men, that is to say, the worst enemies of our religion, but send their children to be instructed and baptized. In this consists the best fruits which our mission at first receives among the Indians, and which is the most certain; for among the great number of infants whom we baptize, not a year passes but many die before they are able to use their reason. But, even among the adults, the greater part are so fervent, and so attached to the Prayer, that they will suffer the most cruel death sooner than abandon it.

It is a blessing to the Illinois that they are so far distant from Quebec, because it renders it impossible to transport to them the "fire-water," as it is carried to others. This drink is among the Indians the greatest obstacle to Christianity, and the source of an infinite number of their most shocking crimes. We know that they never purchase it but to plunge into the most furious intoxication, and the riots and sad deaths of which we were each day the witnesses, ought to outweigh the gain which can be made by the trade in a liquor so fatal.

It was for two years that I remained among the Illinois, at the end of which time I was recalled to devote the rest of my days

to the service of the *Abnakis*. It was the first mission to which I had been destined on my arrival in Canada, and it is that in which, apparently, I shall finish my life. It was necessary, therefore, for me to return to Quebec, for the purpose of going thither to rejoin my dear Indians. I have already described to you the length and difficulties of this journey, and shall therefore only mention a most consoling adventure which happened to me when about forty leagues distance from Quebec.

I found myself in a kind of village, where there were twenty-five French houses, and a Curé who had charge of the inhabitants. Near the village, might be seen an Indian cabin, in which lived a young female of about sixteen years of age, but who had for many years been afflicted with a malady which had at length reduced her to the last extremity. M. the Curé, who did not understand the language of these Indians, requested me to confess the sick person, and conducted me himself to the cabin. In the conversation which I had with this young girl on the truths of religion, I learned that she had been well instructed by one of our missionaries, but had never as yet received Baptism. After having passed two days in putting to her all the questions proper to assure myself on these points—"Do not refuse me," said she, "I conjure you, the grace of Baptism which I demand. You see how much oppression I have upon my breast, and that but little time remains for me to live. What a misfortune would it be to me, and how would you reproach yourself, if I should happen to die without receiving this grace!" I answered, that she should prepare to receive it on the next day, and left her. The joy which my reply gave her, caused so immediate a change, that she was in a state to repair early in the morning to the chapel. I was beyond measure surprised at her arrival, and immediately and most solemnly administered to her the rite of baptism. As soon as it was over she returned to her cabin, where she did not cease to thank the divine mercy for

so great a blessing, and to sigh for the happy moment which should unite her to God for all eternity. Her prayers were favorably heard, and I was privileged to assist at her death. What a providential dispensation for this poor girl, and what a consolation for me to have been the instrument which God was willing to use in placing her in heaven!

You will not require from me, my dear brother, that I should enter into detail with regard to all that has happened to me during the many years that I have been in this mission. My occupations are always the same; and I should expose myself to wearisome repetitions. I will therefore only relate to you certain facts which seem to me most worthy of your attention. I feel authorized to assert, in general, that you would find it difficult to restrain your tears if you should find yourself in my church when our Indians are assembled there, and be a witness of the piety with which they recite their prayers, chant divine offices, and participate in the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. When they have been enlightened by the faith, and sincerely embraced it, they are no longer the same persons, and the greater part preserve undimmed the purity they have received at baptism. It is this which fills me with the deepest joy, when I hear their confessions, which are frequent; no matter what questions I put to them, I often can with difficulty find materials to render absolution necessary.

My duties among them are unceasing. As they look for assistance no where except from their missionary, and have entire confidence in him, it is not sufficient for me to confine myself to the spiritual functions of my ministry, for the sanctification of their souls. It is necessary, also, that I should interest myself in their temporal affairs, that I should be always ready to console them when they come to me for advice, that I should decide their little differences, that I should take care of them when they are ill, that I should bleed them, that I should administer

medicines to them, &c. My days are often so entirely occupied, that I am obliged to shut myself up to find time to attend to my prayers, and the recital of my Office.

The zeal with which God has filled me for the welfare of my Indians, was very much alarmed in the year 1697, when I learned that a tribe of the *Amalingan* Indians was coming to establish themselves within one day's journey of my village. I had reason to fear lest the arts of their medicine-men, that is, the sacrifices which they offer to the Evil Spirit, and the disorders which ordinarily attend them, might produce an impression on some of my young neophytes; but thanks to the Divine Mercy, my fears were presently dissipated in a way which I am going to relate to you.

One of our chiefs, celebrated in this country for his valor, having been killed by the English, who are not far distant from us, the *Amalingans* deputed several of their nation to proceed to our village, for the purpose of drying the tears of the relatives of the illustrious deceased; that is to say, as I have already explained to you, to visit them, to make them presents, and to testify by their dances the sympathy they felt in their affliction. They arrived in our village on Corpus Christi day.* I was then occupied in receiving the confessions of my Indians, which lasted the whole of that day, the night following, and the next day even till noon, when commenced the Procession of the Consecrated Host. This was conducted with much order and devotion, and although in the middle of these forests, with more of pomp and magnificence than you can well imagine. This spectacle, which was entirely new to the *Amalingans*, attracted their attention and excited their admiration. It seemed to me that I ought to avail myself of the favorable disposition which they showed, and therefore after hav-

[* An annual festival in the Church of Rome, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Its design is to commemorate the corporal presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.]

ing assembled them, I made the following address in the Indian style.

"For a long time, my children, I have wished to see you: and now that I have this happiness, it wants but little that my heart should burst. Think of the joy which a father will experience who tenderly loves his children, when they return to him after a long absence, during which they have been exposed to the greatest dangers, and you can conceive a portion of what I feel. For although you do not as yet pray, I shall not cease to regard you as my children, and to have for you the tenderness of a father, because you are the children of the Great Spirit, who has given life to you as well as to those who pray, who has made the Heaven for you as well as for them, who cares for you as he does for them and for me, that all may together enjoy eternal happiness. What however gives me pain, and diminishes the joy I feel at seeing you, is the reflection which is forced upon me, that one day I must be separated from a part of my children, whose lot will be eternally miserable, because they will not pray, while the others who do pray will be in joy which shall never end. When I think of this sad separation, how can I have a contented heart? The joy which I receive from the happiness of some, does not equal my affliction on account of the misery which awaits others. If you had invincible obstacles to the Prayer, and if while you remain in the state in which you now are, I could enable you to enter Heaven, I would spare nothing to procure you this happiness. I would thrust you forward, I would force you to enter there, so much do I love you, and so much do I desire your welfare; but this is a thing which is impossible. It is necessary to pray, it is necessary to be baptized, to enable you to enter that place of enjoyments."

After this preamble, I explained to them at length the principal articles of our faith, and I continued thus:—

"All these sayings which I have endeavored to explain to you,

are not by any means human words; they are the words of the Great Spirit: neither are they at all written, as are the words of a man, on a collar, which they cause to express what they wish; but they are written in the Book of the Great Spirit, where a falsehood could not gain entrance."

To enable you to understand this Indian expression, I must remark, my dear brother, that the custom of these people, when they write to any nation is to send a collar, or a wide belt, on which they have made different figures with grains of porcelain of different colors. They give instructions to him who carries the collar, telling him, "This is what we mean the collar to say to such a nation, or to such a person," and so they send him forth. Our Indians would have difficulty in comprehending what was said, and would give it but little attention, if the speaker did not conform to their manner of thought and expression. I proceeded thus:—

"Courage, my children, listen to the voice of the Great Spirit, which speaks to you by my mouth. He loves you, and his love for you is so great that he has given his life to procure for you life eternal. Alas, perhaps he has only permitted the death of one of our chiefs, as a means of drawing you to the place of the Prayer, and causing you to hear his voice. Reflect then that you are not immortal. A day will come when others in this way will endeavor to dry the tears which are shed for your death, and what will it avail you to have been in this life numbered with great Chiefs, if after death you are cast into eternal flames? He whom you come to mourn with us, had the happiness a thousand times to have listened to the voice of the Great Spirit, and to have been faithful to the Prayer. Pray as he did, and you shall live eternally. Courage, my children, we will not separate at all, that some should go to one place and the rest to another; let us all go to Heaven, it is our country, it is thither you are exhorted to attain by the only Master of life, whose interpreter I am. Think of it seriously."

As soon as I had ceased speaking, they consulted together for some time, until at length their orator made me this answer on their part. "My father, I am delighted to hear you. Your voice has penetrated even to my heart, but my heart is as yet shut, nor am I able now to open it, to let you know what is there, or to which side it will turn. It is necessary that I should wait for many chiefs and other considerable tribes of our nation who will arrive during the next autumn. It is then that I will disclose my heart to you. Behold, my dear father, all that I am able to say to you at this time."

"My heart is content," I replied to them; "I am perfectly satisfied since my words have afforded you pleasure, and you ask time to think of them. You will only be firmer in your attachment to the Prayer when once you have embraced it. Nevertheless, I shall not cease to address myself to the Great Spirit, and to beg him to regard you with the eyes of mercy, and to strengthen your thoughts to the end that they may decide in favor of the Prayer." After this I left the assembly, and they returned to their own village.

When the autumn came, I learned that one of our Indians was about to go to the *Amalingans*, to obtain corn for planting the fields. I sent for him, and charged him to tell them on my part, that I was impatient again to see my children, that I was always present with them in spirit, and I prayed them to remember the promise they had given me. The Indian faithfully fulfilled his commission, and this was the answer which the *Amalingans* made.

"We are very much obliged to our father for thinking of us without ceasing. For our part, we have meditated much on what he has said to us. We cannot forget those words while we have a heart, for they have been so deeply engraven there that nothing can efface them. We are persuaded that he loves us, we wish to listen to him, and to obey him in that point which he so much

desires us. We accept the prayer which he purposes to us, for we see nothing in it but what is good and praiseworthy. We are entirely resolved to embrace it, and should at once go to find our father in his village, if he had there sufficient food for our sustenance during the time which he should devote to our instruction. But how can we find it there? We know that hunger is in the cabin of our father, and it is this which doubly afflicts us, that our father suffers hunger, and that we cannot go to see him that he may instruct us. If our father could come and pass some time here with us, he would live and might instruct us. This is what you must say to our father."

This answer of the *Amalingans* was returned to me at a most favorable time. The greater part of my Indians were going to be away for some days to procure food to last them until the harvest of Indian corn. Their absence, therefore, gave me leisure to visit the *Amalingans*, and on the next day I embarked in a canoe to repair to their village. I was about a league distant, when they perceived me, and immediately saluted me with a continual discharge of their guns, which lasted until I landed from the canoe. This honor which they had paid me, assured me of their present dispositions. I did not lose the least time, but as soon as I had arrived, I caused them to plant the Cross, and those who accompanied me raised as soon as possible a Chapel, which they made of bark, in the same way in which they form their cabins, and within it they erected an altar. While they were occupied in this work, I visited all the cabins of the *Amalingans*, to prepare them for the instructions I was about to give. As soon as I commenced, they gave the most assiduous attention. I assembled them three times during the day in the Chapel, namely, in the morning after mass, at noon, and in the evening after prayer. During the rest of the day I went round the cabins, where I again gave them more particular instructions.

When after some days of continual toil, I judged that they

were sufficiently instructed, I fixed the day on which they should come to receive regeneration in the waters of Holy Baptism. The first who came to the Chapel were the chief, the orator, three of the most considerable men of the nation, with two females. Immediately after their baptism, two other bands, each of twenty Indians, succeeded them, who received the same grace. In fine, all the rest continued to arrive there on that day and during the next.

You can well believe, my dear brother, that severe as may be these labors for a missionary, he is at the same time well recompensed for all his fatigues, by the delightful consolation that he has been the means of bringing an entire nation into the path of safety. I had prepared to leave them and return to my own village, when a deputation came to me on their part, with the message, that they had all assembled in one place, and prayed me to repair to their meeting. As soon as I appeared in their midst, the orator addressed these words to me in the name of all the rest: "Our father," said he, "we can find no words in which to testify the inexpressible joy we have felt at having received baptism. It seems to us now that we have a different heart. Everything which caused us any difficulty is entirely dissipated, our thoughts are no longer wavering, the baptism has strengthened us within, and we are firmly resolved to respect it all the days of our life. Behold what we wish to say to you before you leave us." I replied to them in a short discourse, in which I exhorted them to persevere in the grace they had received, and to do nothing unworthy of the rank of children of God, with which they had been honored when they received Holy Baptism. As they were preparing to depart to the sea-shore, I added, that on their return we would determine which was best, whether we should go and live with them, or they should come to form with us one single village.

The village in which I live is called *Nanrantsouack*, and is sit-

uated in a country between Acadia and New England. This mission is about twenty-four leagues distance from *Pentagouet*, and they reckon it to be a hundred leagues from *Pentagouet* to Port Royal. The river which flows through my mission is the largest of all those which water the territories of the Indians. It should be marked on the maps by the name of *Kinibeki*, and it is this which has induced the French to give these Indians the name of *Kanibals*. This river empties into the sea at *Sankderank*, which is only five or six leagues from *Pemquit*. After having ascended forty leagues from *Sankderank*, you arrive at my village, which is on the height of a point of land. We are, at the most, distant only two days' journey from the English settlements, while it takes us more than a fortnight to reach Quebec, and the journey is very painful and difficult. It would therefore be natural that our Indians should trade with the English, and every possible inducement has been held out to them to attract and gain their friendship; but all these efforts were useless, and nothing was able to detach them from their alliance with the French. And yet the only tie which unites us so closely is their firm attachment to the Catholic faith. They are convinced that if they give themselves up to the English, they will shortly find themselves without a missionary, without a sacrifice, without a sacrament, and even without any exercise of religion, so that little by little, they would be plunged again into their former heathenism. This firmness of our Indians has been subjected to many kinds of tests by their powerful neighbors, but without their being ever able to gain anything.

At the time that the war was about to be rekindled between the European powers, the English governor, who had lately arrived at Boston, requested a conference with our Indians by the sea-shore, on an island which he designated.* They consented,

[* This was Governor Dudley in 1703. They met at Casco. The account of this interview given by Rale, differs so much from that of the

and begged me to accompany them thither, that they might consult me with regard to any artful propositions which might be made to them, so that they could be assured their answers would contain nothing contrary to their religion or the interest of the King's service. I therefore followed them, with the intention of merely remaining in their quarters, to aid their counsels, without appearing before the Governor. As we approached the island, being more than two hundred canoes in number, the English saluted us with the discharge of all the cannon of their ships, and the Indians responded to it by a similar discharge from all their guns. Immediately afterwards the Governor appeared on the island, the Indians hastily landed, and I thus found myself where I did not desire to be, and where the Governor did not wish that I should be. As soon as he perceived me, he advanced some steps to where I was, and after the usual compliments returned to the midst of his people, while I rejoined the Indians.

"It is by the order of our Queen," said he, "that I have come to see you: she earnestly desires that you should live in peace. If any of the English should be so imprudent as to wrong you, do not think to avenge yourselves, but immediately address your complaints to me, and I will render you prompt justice. If war should happen to take place between us and the French, remain neutral, and do not in any way mix yourselves in our difficulties. The French are as strong as we are: permit us therefore to settle our own quarrels. We will supply your wants, we will take your furs, and we will afford you our merchandise at a moderate price." My presence prevented him from saying all that he had intended, for it was not without design that he had brought a minister with him.

When he had ceased speaking, the Indians retired to deliberate among themselves on the answer they should make. During

New England historians that it is impossible in any way to reconcile them. See, for example, Penhallow's Indian wars, N. H. Hist. Coll. vol. i. p. 20.]

this time the Governor took me aside. "I pray you, Monsieur," said he, "do not induce the Indians to make war on us." I replied to him "that my religion, and my character as a priest, engaged me to give them only the counsels of peace." I should have spoken more, had I not found myself immediately surrounded by a band of some twenty young warriors, who feared lest the Governor wished to take me away. Meantime the Indians advanced, and one of them made the Governor the following reply:—

"Great Chief, you have told us not to unite with the Frenchman in case that you declare war against him. Know that the Frenchman is my brother; we have one and the same Prayer both for him and ourselves, and we dwell in the same cabin at two fires, he is at one fire and I am at the other fire. If I should see you enter the cabin on the side of the fire where my brother the Frenchman is seated, I should watch you from my mat where I am seated at the other fire. If, observing you, I perceived that you had a hatchet, I should think, what does the Englishman intend to do with that hatchet? Then I should raise myself from my mat to see what he was going to do. If he lifted the hatchet to strike my brother the Frenchman, I should seize mine and rush at the Englishman to strike him. Would it be possible for me to see my brother struck in my cabin, and I remain quiet on my mat? No, no, I love my brother too well not to defend him. Thus I would say to you, Great Chief, do nothing to my brother, and I will not do anything to you. Remain quiet on your mat, and I will remain quietly on mine."

Thus the conference ended. A short time afterwards some of our Indians arrived from Quebec, and reported that a French ship had brought the news of war being renewed between France and England. Immediately our Indians, after having deliberated according to their custom, ordered their young people to kill the dogs to make a war feast, and to learn there who wished to engage themselves. The feast took place, they arranged the kettle, they

danced, and two hundred and fifty warriors were present. After the festival they appointed a day to come to confession. I exhorted them to preserve the same attachment to their Prayer that they would have in the village, to observe strictly the laws of war, not to be guilty of any cruelty, never to kill any one except in the heat of combat, to treat humanely those who surrendered themselves prisoners, &c.

The manner in which these people make war, renders a handful of their warriors more formidable, than would be a body of two or three thousand European soldiers. As soon as they have entered the enemy's country, they divide themselves into different parties, one of thirty warriors, another of forty, &c. They say to each other, "To you, we give this hamlet to devour," (that is their expression), "To those others we give this village, &c." Then they arrange the signal for a simultaneous attack, and at the same time on different points. In this way our two hundred and fifty warriors spread themselves over more than twenty leagues of country, filled with villages, hamlets, and mansions; on the day designated they made their attack together early in the morning, and in that single day swept away all that the English possessed there, killed more than two hundred, and took five hundred prisoners, with the loss on their part of only a few warriors slightly wounded. They returned from this expedition to the village, having each one two canoes loaded with the plunder they had taken.

During the time that the war lasted, they carried desolation into all the territories which belonged to the English, ravaged their villages, their forts, their farms, took an immense number of their cattle, and made more than six hundred prisoners. At length these gentlemen, pursuaded with reason that in keeping my Indians in their attachment to the Catholic faith, I was more and more strengthening the bonds which united them to the French, set in operation every kind of wile and artifice to detach

them from me. Neither offers nor promises were spared to induce the Indians to deliver me into their hands, or at least to send me back to Quebec, and take one of their ministers in my place. They made many attempts to surprise me and carry me off by force; they even went so far as to promise a thousand pounds sterling to any one who would bring them my head. You may well believe, my dear brother, that these threats are able neither to intimidate me, nor diminish my zeal. I should be only too happy if I might become their victim, or if God should judge me worthy to be loaded with irons, and to shed my blood for the salvation of my dear Indians.

At the first news which arrived of peace having been made in Europe, the Governor of Boston sent word to our Indians, that if they would assemble in a place which he designated, he would confer with them on the present conjuncture of affairs.* All the Indians accordingly repaired to the place appointed, and the Governor addressed them thus:—"Men of *Naranhous*, I would inform you that peace is made between the King of France and our Queen, and by this treaty of peace the King of France has ceded to our Queen, Plaisance and Portrail, with all the adjacent territories. Thus, if you wish, we can live in peace together. We have done so in former times, but the suggestions of the French have made you break it, and it was to please them that you came to kill us. Let us forget all these unfortunate affairs, and cast them into the sea, so that they shall not appear any more, and we may be good friends."

"It is well", replied the Orator in the name of the Indians "that the Kings should be in peace; I am contented that it should be so, and have no longer any difficulty in making

[* This was after the war was brought to a close by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Gov. Dudley at that time again met the Indians at Portsmouth on the 11th of July, 1713. Here again the accounts given by Rale and Penhallow are widely different.]

peace with you. I was not the one who struck you during the last twelve years; it was the Frenchmen who used my arm to strike you. We were at peace, it is true. I had even thrown away my hatchet I know not where, and as I was reposing on my mat, thinking of nothing, the young men brought a message which the Governor of Canada had sent, and by which he said to me, 'My son, the Englishman has struck me; help me to avenge myself; take the hatchet, and strike the Englishman.' I, who have always listened to the words of the French Governor, search for my hatchet, I find it entirely rusted, I burnish it up, I place it at my belt to go and strike. Now, the Frenchman tells me to lay it down; I therefore throw it far from me, that no one may longer see the blood with which it is reddened. Thus, let us live in peace; I consent to it.

"But you say that the Frenchman has given you Plaisance and Portrail, which is in my neighborhood, with all the adjacent territories. He may give you anything he pleases, but for me, I have my land which the Great Spirit has given me to live on: as long as there shall be child remaining of my nation, he will fight to preserve it."

Every thing ended in this friendly way: the Governor made a great feast for the Indians, after which each one withdrew.

The happy arrival of peace, and the tranquillity they began to enjoy, suggested to the Indians the idea of rebuilding our Church, ruined during a sudden irruption which the English made, while they were absent from the village.* As we were very far removed from Quebec, and were much nearer Boston, they sent a deputation thither of several of the principal men of the nation to ask for workmen, with the promise of paying them liberally for their labor. The Governor received them with great demonstrations of friendship, and gave them all kinds of caresses. "I wish myself to rebuild your Church", said he, "and I will

[* This is known in New England history as the expedition of Colonel Hilton in 1705.]

spend more for you, than has been done by the French Governor, whom you call your father. It would be his duty to rebuild it, since it was in some degree for his sake that it was ruined, by inducing you to strike me; for, as for me, I defend myself as I am able; he on the contrary, after having used you for his defence, has abandoned you. I will do much more for you, for not only will I grant you the workmen, but I wish also to pay them myself, and to defray all the other expences of the edifice which you desire to have erected. But as it is not reasonable that I who am English should build a Church, without placing there also an English Minister to guard it, and to teach the Prayer, I will give you one with whom you will be contented, and you shall send back to Quebec the French Minister who is now in your village."

"Your words astonish me," replied the deputy of the Indians, "and you excite my wonder by the proposition which you make to me. When you first came hither, you saw me a long time before the French governors; but neither those who preceded you, nor your ministers have spoken to me of prayer, or of the Great Spirit. They have seen my furs, my skins of the beaver and the elk, and it is about these only they have thought; these they have sought with the greatest eagerness, so that I was not able to furnish them enough, and when I carried them a large quantity I was their great friend, but no further. On the contrary, my canoe having one day missed the route, I lost my way, and wandered a long time at random, until at last I landed near Quebec, in a great village of the Algonquins, where the black Robes* were teaching. Scarcely had I arrived when one of the black Robes came to see me. I was loaded with furs, but the French black Robe scarcely deigned to look at them. He spoke to me at once of the Great Spirit, of Paradise, of Hell, of the Prayer, which is the only way to reach Heaven. I heard

* The Jesuits.

him with pleasure, and so much delighted in his conversations, that I remained a long time in that village to listen to them. In fine, the Prayer pleased me, and I asked him to instruct me; I demanded Baptism, and I received it. At last I returned to my country, and related what had happened to me. They envied my happiness, they wished to participate in it, they departed to find the black Robe and demand of him Baptism. It is thus that the French have acted towards me. If as soon as you had seen me, you had spoken to me of the Prayer, I should have had the unhappiness to pray as you do, for I was not capable of discovering whether your Prayer was good. Thus, I tell you that I hold to the Prayer of the French; I agree to it, and I shall be faithful to it even until the earth is burnt and destroyed. Keep then your workmen, your gold, and your minister, I will not speak to you more of them: I will ask the French Governor my father, to send them to me."

Indeed, Monsieur the Governor had no sooner been apprised of the ruin of our Church, than he sent some workmen to rebuild it. It possesses a beauty which would cause it to be admired even in Europe, and nothing has been spared to adorn it. You have been able to see by the detail I have given in my letter to my Nephew, that in the depths of these forests, and among these Indian tribes, the Divine service is performed with much propriety and dignity. It is to this point that I am very attentive, not only when the Indians reside in the village, but also all the time that they are obliged to remain by the sea-shore, where they go twice each year, for the purpose of obtaining means of subsistence. Our Indians have so entirely destroyed the game in this part of the country, that during ten years they have scarcely found either elk or roebuck. The bears and beavers have also become very rare. They have scarcely anything on which to live but Indian corn, beans, and pumpkins. They grind the corn between two stones to reduce it to meal, then they make it into

a kind of hominy, which they often season with fat or with dried fish. When the corn fails them, they search in the ploughed land for potatoes, or acorns, which last they esteem as much as corn. After having dried them, they are boiled in a kettle with ashes to take away their bitterness. For myself I eat them dry, and they answer for bread.

At a particular season of the year, they repair to a river not far distant, where during one month the fish ascend in such great quantities, that a person could fill fifty thousand barrels in a day, if he could endure the labor. They are a kind of large herrings, very agreeable to the taste when they are fresh; crowding one upon another to the depth of a foot, they are drawn out as if they were water. The Indians dry them for eight or ten days, and live on them during all the time that they are planting their fields.

It is only in the Spring that they plant their corn, and they do not give them their last tillage until towards Corpus-Christi Day. After this they deliberate as to what spot on the sea-shore they shall go to find something to live on until the harvest, which does not ordinarily take place until a little after the Festival of the Assumption.* When their deliberations are over, they send a messenger to pray me to repair to their assembly. As soon as I have arrived there, one of them addresses me thus in the name of all the others. "Our father, what I say to you is what all those whom you see here would say; you know us, you know that we are in want of food, we have had difficulty in giving the last tillage to our fields, and now have no other resource until the harvest, but to go and seek provisions by the sea-shore. It will be hard for us to abandon our Prayer, and it is for this reason we hope you will be willing to accompany us, so that while seeking the means of living, we shall not at all interrupt our Prayer. Such and such persons will embark you, and what you have to

[*.The 15th of August.]

carry with you shall be distributed in the other canoes. This is what I have to say to you." I have no sooner replied to them *kekikberba*, (it is an Indian term which implies, I hear you, my children, I agree to what you ask,) than they all cry out together *oriorie*, which is an expression of thanks. Immediately afterwards we leave the village.

As soon as they reach the place where they are to pass the night, they fix up stakes at intervals in the form of a chapel; they surround them with a large tent made of ticking, which has no opening except in front. It is all finished in a quarter of an hour. I always carry with me a beautiful board of cedar about four feet in length, with the necessary supports, and this serves for an altar, while above it they place an appropriate canopy. I ornament the interior of the Chapel with very beautiful silk cloths; a mat of reeds dyed and admirably made, a large bear skin serves for a carpet. They carry this always prepared, and no sooner are they settled down than the Chapel is arranged. At night I take my repose on a carpet; the Indians sleep in the air in the open fields if it does not rain, but if the snow or the rain falls, they cover themselves with bark which they carry with them, and which they have rolled out until it resembles cloth. If their journey is made in the winter, they remove the snow from a space large enough for the Chapel to occupy, and arrange it as usual. There each day is made the morning and evening prayers, and the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up.

When the Indians have reached their destination, the very next day they occupy themselves in raising the Church, which they dress up with their bark cloths. I carry with me my plate, and every thing which is necessary to ornament the choir, which I hang with silk cloths and beautiful calicos. Divine Service is performed there as at the village, and in fact they form a kind of village with all their wigwams made of bark, which are all prepared in less than an hour. After the Festival of the Assump-

tion, they leave the sea and return to their village for the purpose of reaping their harvest. During this time they are obliged to live very sparingly until All-Saints' Day,* when they return a second time to the sea. It is while there, during this season, that they fare daintily. Besides the large fish, the shell-fish, and the fruits, they find also bustards, ducks, and all kinds of game, with which the sea is covered at the place where they encamp, which is divided up by a great number of little islands. The hunters who go out in the morning to shoot ducks and other kinds of game, sometimes kill twenty of them at a single discharge of their guns. Towards the Festival of the Purification,† or later towards Ash-Wednesday, they return to the village, except the hunters, who disperse about in pursuit of the bears, elks, deer, and beavers.

These good Indians have often given proofs of their sincere attachment for me, particularly on two occasions, when being with them at the sea-shore, they became exceedingly alarmed on my account. One day while they were busy in the chase, a report was suddenly spread, that a party of the English had made an irruption into my quarters and carried me off. In that very hour they assembled, and the result of their deliberation was, that they would pursue the party until they had overtaken it, and would snatch me from their hands, even at the cost of life. The same instant they sent two young Indians to my cabin, the night being then far advanced. When they entered my cabin, I was engaged in composing the life of a saint in the Indian language. "Ah, our father!" they cried out, "how relieved we are to see you!" "And I am equally rejoiced to see you," I replied; "but what has brought you here at so unusual a time?" "Our coming is indeed useless," said they; "but we were assured that the English had carried you off. We came to mark their tracks, and our warriors could scarcely be restrained from pursuing them, and

[* The 1st of November.] [† The 2nd of February.]

attacking the fort, where, if the news had been true, the English would, without doubt, have imprisoned you." "You see, my children," I answered, "that your fears are unfounded; but the affectionate care which my children have shown, fills my heart with joy, for it is a proof of their attachment to the Prayer. To-morrow you shall depart immediately after Mass, to undeceive as soon as possible our brave warriors, and to relieve them from their anxiety."

Another alarm, equally false, placed me in great embarrassment, and exposed me to the danger of perishing by famine and misery. Two Indians came in haste to my abode, to give me notice that they had seen the English within a half day's journey. "Our father," said they to me, "there is not the least time to lose. You will risk too much by remaining here. We will wait for them, and perhaps will keep in advance of them. The runners are going to set out this moment to watch them. But as for you, it is necessary that you should go to the village with the persons whom we have brought to conduct you thither. When we know that you are in a place of safety, we shall be easy."

I therefore departed at break of day with ten Indians, who acted as my guides; but after some days' march, we found ourselves at the end of our small stock of provisions. My conductors killed a dog which followed them, and eat it; finally they were obliged to resort to their bags made of the skin of the sea-wolf, which they also eat. I found it however impossible for me to bring myself to taste them. Nevertheless I lived on a kind of wood, which they boiled, and which, after being thus prepared, is as tender as radishes after they have been partially cooked. They use all the wood except the heart, which is very hard, and which they throw aside. It had not a bad taste, but I had great difficulty in swallowing it. Sometimes too they found attached to the trees excrescences of wood which are white, like large mushrooms: these they boil and reduce to a kind of jelly;

but it is necessary to acquire a taste for them. At other times they dried in the fire the bark of the evergreen oak, then they pounded it up and made a kind of paste, or else used it dry. Then there were the leaves which grew in the clefts of the rocks, and which they call *tripes de roche*; when these are boiled they make a paste very black and disagreeable. But of all these I eat, for there is nothing which famine will not enable us to digest.

With food of this kind we could make very short journeys in a day. We arrived at last at a lake which had begun to thaw, and where there was already four inches depth of water on the ice. It was necessary to cross it with our snow-shoes, but as these were made of strips of skin, as soon as they were wet they became very heavy, and rendered our march exceedingly difficult. One of our people went before to sound the way, yet I suddenly found myself sinking into my knees. Another who was at my side presently sunk to his waist, crying out, "My father, I am perishing!" As I approached to give him my hand, I found myself sinking still deeper. At last, it was not without great difficulty that we extricated ourselves from this danger, through the incumbrance caused by our snow-shoes, of which we could not rid ourselves. Nevertheless the risk I ran of drowning was much less than that of dying of cold in the midst of this half-frozen lake.

But the next day new dangers awaited us in the passage of a river which it was necessary for us to cross on the floating ice. We, however, extricated ourselves happily from it, and at length arrived at the village. My first step was to dig up a little Indian corn which I had left in my abode, and I eat it, entirely raw as it was, to appease my first hunger, while the poor Indians wer making all kinds of efforts to regale me. And in truth the repast which they prepared for me, frugal as it was, and little as it might have seemed tempting to you, was in their eyes a veritable feast. At first they served me with a plate of boiled Indian

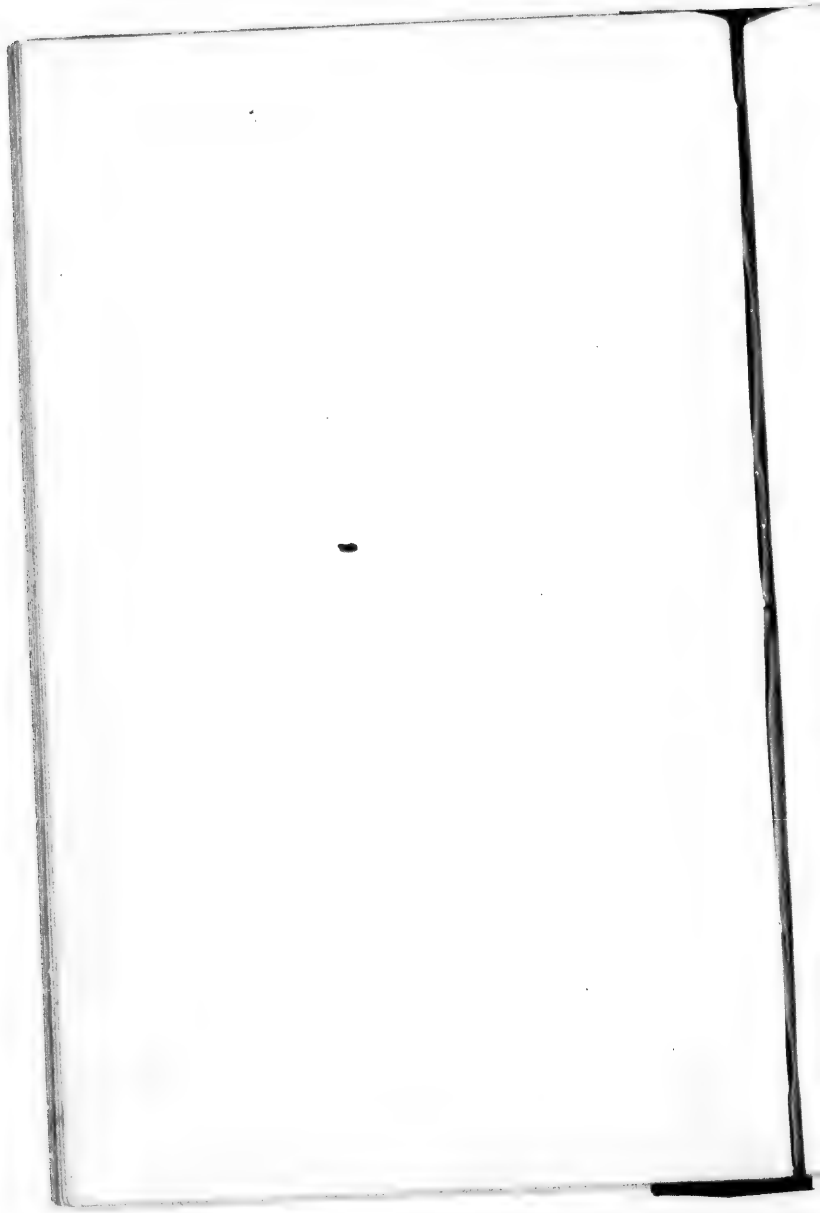
corn. For the second course, they gave me a small piece of bear's meat, with acorns, and a thin cake of Indian corn cooked under the ashes. At last, the third course, which formed the dessert, consisted of an ear of Indian corn roasted before the fire, with some grains of the same corn cooked under the ashes. When I asked them why they had provided for me such excellent fare, "How now! our father," they replied to me, "is it not two days since you have eaten anything? could we do less? would to God that we were able often to regale you in this way!"

Whilst I was thinking to recover from my fatigues, one of the Indians who were dwelling by the sea-shore, being ignorant of my return to the village, caused a new alarm. Having come to my quarters, and neither finding me anywhere, nor those who were in the same cabin with me, he did not at all doubt but that we had been taken off by a party of the English, and while on his way to give intelligence to those who were in his quarter, he reached the banks of a river. There, he took a piece of bark, on which he drew with charcoal a representation of the English surrounding me, and one of them cutting off my head. (This is the only kind of writing which the Indians possess, and by these kinds of figures they convey to each other information, in the same way that we should do by our letters.) He then placed this kind of letter around a stick which he planted on the bank of the river, for the purpose of informing those who passed as to what had happened to me. A short time afterwards, some Indians who were passing by that spot in six canoes to go to the village, perceived this bark. "See that writing," said they, "let us learn what it tells us. Alas!" they all cried on reading it, "the English have killed those of the quarter in which our father lives; as for him, they have cut off his head." They immediately plucked off the lock of hair which they are accustomed to leave negligently flowing on their shoulders, and sat down about the stick on which they had found the letter, even to the

next day, without speaking a word. This ceremony is among them the sign of the deepest affliction. The next day they continued their route until they arrived within half a league of the village, where they halted. From thence they sent one of their number through the woods to the village, to see whether the English had come to burn the fort and the cabins. I happened to be walking up and down along the river by the fort, for the purpose of reciting my Breviary, when the Indian arrived opposite to me on the other side, "Ah, my father," he cried out, "how relieved I am to see you! My heart was dead, but it revives at seeing you. We found a writing which told us that the English had cut off your head. How relieved I am that it was false." When I proposed to him that I should send over a canoe to enable him to cross the river, "No," he replied, "it is enough that I have seen you. I retrace my steps to carry this agreeable news to those who have accompanied me, and we will shortly join you." And in truth they arrived there that very day.

I think, my very dear brother, that I have satisfied the desire you expressed to me, by the summary account I have given you of the nature of the country, the character of the Indians, my occupations, my toils, and the dangers to which I am exposed. You judge, without doubt, that it is from the English in our neighborhood that I have most to fear. It is true that for a long time past they have sought my destruction, but neither the ill-will they bear me, nor the death with which they threaten me,* can ever separate me from my ancient flock. I commend them to your holy prayers, and am, with the most tender attachment, &c.

* He was murdered during the following year.



DEATH OF FATHER RASLES

1724.

LETTER III.

FROM FATHER DE LA CHASSE, SUPERIOR GENERAL OF MISSIONS IN NEW FRANCE, TO FATHER * * * OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

At Quebec, the 29th of October, 1724.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

In the deep grief which we feel for the loss of one of our oldest Missionaries, it is a sweet consolation for us, that he has fallen a victim to his love, and his zeal to preserve the faith in the hearts of his neophytes. You have been already apprized by previous letters of the origin of the war which was kindled up between the English and the Indians. In the former it was the desire to extend their dominions; in the latter, the horror of all subjection and the attachment to their religion, caused at first that misunderstanding, which was at length followed by an open rupture.

The Father Rasles, missionary to the *Abnakis*, had become exceedingly odious to the English. Convinced that his industry in strengthening the Indians in their faith constituted the greatest obstacle to the design they had formed of encroaching upon their lands, they set a price upon his head; and, on more than one occasion, endeavored either to capture or destroy him. At last they have effected their object in satisfying their transports of hate, and freeing themselves from this apostolical man; but, at the same time, they have procured for him a glorious death, which was always the height of his desires; for we know that for

a long time he had aspired to the happiness of sacrificing his life for his flock. I will describe to you in a few words the circumstances of this event.

After frequent hostilities had taken place on one side and the other between the two nations, a small force, composed of the English and their Indian allies to the number of about eleven hundred men, came unexpectedly to attack the village of *Narantsouak*. The thick brushwood by which the village is surrounded, aided them in concealing their march, and as besides it was not even enclosed by palisades, the Indians taken by surprise, did not perceive the approach of their enemies, until they received a general discharge of musketry which riddled all the cabins. There were at that time but about fifty warriors in the village. At the first noise of the muskets they tumultuously seized their arms, and went forth from their cabins to make head against the enemy. Their design was, not rashly to sustain a contest with so great a number of combatants, but to cover the flight of the women and children, and to give them time to gain the other side of the river, which was not as yet occupied by the English.

Father Rasles, warned by the clamors and the tumult, of the peril which threatened his neophytes, promptly went forth from his house, and without fear presented himself before the enemy. His hope was, either to suspend, by his presence, their first efforts, or, at least, to draw on him alone their attention, and thus, at the expense of his own life, to procure the safety of his flock.

The instant they perceived the missionary they raised a general shout, followed by a discharge of musket balls which rained on him. He fell dead at the foot of a large cross which he had erected in the middle of the village, to mark the public profession they had made to adore in that place the crucified God.

Seven Indians who surrounded him, and who exposed their lives to preserve that of their Father, were killed at his side.*

The death of the shepherd spread consternation through the flock. The Indians took to flight, and crossed the river, part by the ford and part by swimming. They had to endure all the fury of their enemies, even to the moment when they took refuge in the woods on the other side of the river. There they found themselves assembled to the number of about a hundred and fifty. Although more than two thousand musket shots had been directed against them, they had but about thirty persons killed, including women and children, and fourteen wounded. The English did not attempt to pursue the fugitives, but contented themselves with pillaging and burning the village. The fire which they kindled in the church was preceded by an unhallowed profanation of the sacred vessels and of the adorable body of Jesus Christ.

The precipitate retreat of the enemy permitted the Nanrantsouakans to return to the village. On the morrow, they visited the ruins of their cabins, while the women on their part sought for herbs and plants to dress the wounded. Their first care was to weep over the body of their missionary; they found it pierced with a thousand wounds, his scalp taken off, the skull split by blows of a hatchet. the mouth and eyes filled with mud, the bones of the legs broken, and all the limbs mutilated. They were scarcely able to attribute except to the Indian allies of the En-

[* Hutchinson's account (*Hist.* v. ii., p. 311), which is gathered from those present in the action, differs widely from that of Pere de la Chasse. He states that the force sent on this expedition only amounted to two hundred and eight men. His narrative of Rale's death is, that he shut himself up in a wigwam, from which he fired upon the English. Moulton, the commander, had given orders not to kill the priest. But a wound inflicted upon one of the English by Rale's fire, so exasperated Jacques, a lieutenant, that he burst the door, and shot Rale through the head.]

glish, such an excess of inhumanity on a body deprived of feeling and of life.

After these fervent Christians had washed and kissed many times the precious remains of their Father, they buried him in the same spot where the evening before he had celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that is, on the place where the altar had stood before the burning of the Church.*

It is by so precious a death that this apostolical man finished, on the 23rd of August of this year, a career of thirty-seven years passed in the painful toils of this mission. He was in the 67th year of his age. His fasts and continual fatigues had latterly enfeebled his constitution. During the last nineteen years he had dragged himself about with difficulty, in consequence of a

[* In one of the former letters we gave a quotation from Whittier's beautiful poem, describing the scene which might have been witnessed in that little Indian village, during the ministry of Rale. In the following lines he has pictured the ruin as it was presented to some Indian wanderers shortly after the battle. From that bloody day the Norridgwock tribe was blotted out from the list of the Indian nations.

" No wigwam smoke is curling there;
The very earth is scorched and bare;
And they pause and listen to catch a sound
Of breathing life, but there comes not one,
Save the fox's bark and the rabbit's bound;
And here and there, on the blackening ground,
White bones are glistening in the sun.
And where the house of prayer arose,
And the holy hymn at daylight's close,
And the aged priest stood up to bless
The children of the wilderness,
There is naught, save ashes sodden and dank,
And the birchen boats of the Norridgwock,
Tethered to tree, and stump, and rock,
Rotting along the river bank!"]

fall in which he broke his right thigh and his left leg. It happened that the fractured parts having badly united, it became necessary to break the left leg anew. While they were drawing it most violently, he sustained this painful operation with extraordinary firmness and admirable tranquillity. Our physician who was present appeared so astonished, that he could not forbear saying to him: "Ah, my Father, permit at least some groans to escape you, for you have cause for them."

Father Rasles joined to talents which made him an excellent missionary, those virtues which are necessary for the Evangelical Ministry, to be exercised with effect among our Indians. He enjoyed robust health, and with the exception of the accident I have mentioned, I do not know that he ever had the least indisposition. We were surprised at his industry and readiness in acquiring the different Indian languages. There was not one on this continent of which he had not some smattering. Besides the Abnakis language, which he spoke for a long time, he knew also the Huron, the Otaouais, and the Illinois. He availed himself of them with great effect in the different missions where they are used. Since his arrival in Canada, he was never seen to act inconsistently with his character; he was always firm and courageous, severe to himself, tender and compassionate in his regard to others.

It is but three years since, that by order of Monsieur our Governor, I made a journey through Acadia. In conversation with Father Rasles, I represented to him that in case they declared war against the Indians, he would run the risk of his life; that his village being but fifteen leagues distant from the English forts, he would find himself exposed to the first irruptions; that his preservation was necessary to his flock, and that he ought to take measures for his own security. "My measures are taken," he answered in a firm tone; "God has committed this flock to my care, and I will share its lot, being too happy

if permitted to sacrifice myself for it." He repeated often the same thing to his neophytes, to strengthen their constancy in the faith. "We have had but too good a proof," they themselves have said to me, "that our dear Father spoke to us from the abundance of his heart; we have seen him with a tranquil and serene air meet death, and oppose himself alone to the fury of the enemy, to retard their first efforts, for the purpose of giving us time to escape the danger, and to preserve our lives."

As a price had been set upon his head, and they had attempted at different times to capture him, the Indians proposed to him during the last spring, that they should conduct him farther into the country on the side towards Quebec, where he would be protected from the perils by which his life was menaced. "What opinion then have you of me," he answered, with an air of indignation; "do you take me for a cowardly deserter? Ah! what would become of your faith, if I should desert you? Your salvation is dearer to me than my life."

He was indefatigable in the exercises of his zeal. Without cessation being occupied in exhorting the Indians to virtue, he thought of nothing but making them earnest Christians. His manner of preaching, vehement and pathetic, made a vivid impression on their hearts. Some families of the Loups,* arrived lately from Orange,† have told me with tears in their eyes, that they were indebted to him for their conversion to Christianity. Having received Baptism from him about thirty years ago, the instructions which he at that time gave them, had never been effaced from their minds, so efficacious had been his words, and so deep their traces in the hearts of those who heard them.

He was not contented with instructing the Indians almost every day in the church, but often visited them in their cabins. His familiar conversations charmed them, since he knew how to temper them with a holy cheerfulness, which pleased the Indians

* Indian nations. [† *Fort Orange*—Albany.]

much more than a grave and sombre air. Thus he had the art to persuade them whatever he wished, and he was among them as a master in the midst of his scholars.

Notwithstanding the continual occupations of his ministry, he never omitted the Holy Exercises which are observed in our religious houses. He rose and offered his prayers at the hour which is there appointed. He never excused himself from the eight days of retreat from the world in each year, and had set apart for this purpose the first days of Lent, which is the time that the Saviour entered into the desert. "Unless we fix a particular time in the year for these holy exercises," he one day said to me, "one occupation succeeds another, and after many delays we run the risk of not finding time to observe them?"

Religious poverty was exemplified in all his person, in his furniture, in his food, and in his dress. In a spirit of mortification he interdicted himself the use of wine, even when he found himself among the French. His ordinary nourishment was a preparation of meal of Indian corn. During certain winters, when the Indians were often in want of everything, he found himself reduced to live on acorns; but far from complaining, he never seemed better contented. During the last three years of his life, while the war prevented the Indians from freely entering into the chase, or planting their fields, their necessities became extreme, and the Missionary often found himself in dreadful want. It became necessary to send to him from Quebec the provisions required for his subsistence. "I am ashamed," he wrote to me, "of the care which you take of me: a Missionary born to suffer should not be so well treated."

He did not suffer any one to lend a hand to assist him in the most ordinary cares, but always attended to himself. He cultivated his own garden, prepared his own firewood, attended to his cabin and his hominy, repaired his old clothes, endeavoring in the spirit of poverty to make them last as long as possible.

The cassock which he had on at the time he was killed, seemed so worn and in so miserable a state to those who stripped him of it, that they did not think it worth carrying off, as they had at first intended. They threw it back on his body, and it was sent to us at Quebec.

To the same extent that he treated himself severely was he compassionate and charitable to others. He retained nothing for himself, but everything that he received he immediately distributed to his poor neophytes. Thus the greater part have given at his death demonstrations of grief more vivid than if they had lost their nearest relations.

He took extraordinary pains to ornament and embellish his church, being persuaded that this external show which produced an effect on the senses, animated the devotion of uncivilized people, and inspired them with the most profound veneration for our holy mysteries. As he knew a little of painting, and also understood the art of turning, it was decorated with many works which he had himself executed.

You will well judge, my Reverend Father, that these virtues of which New France was the witness during so many years, had gained for him the respect and affection both of the French and Indians.

Thus he was universally regretted. No one can doubt but that he was put to death out of hatred to his ministry, and his zeal in establishing the true faith in the hearts of the Indians. This is the opinion which is entertained by M. de Bellemont, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, at Montreal. Having asked from him the accustomed suffrages for the deceased, for the sake of the intercourse of prayers which we have among us, he replied to me, by using those well known words of St. Augustine, that it was doing an injury to a martyr to pray for him. "Injuriam facit martyri qui orat pro eo."

May it please the Lord, that his blood shed for so just a cause,

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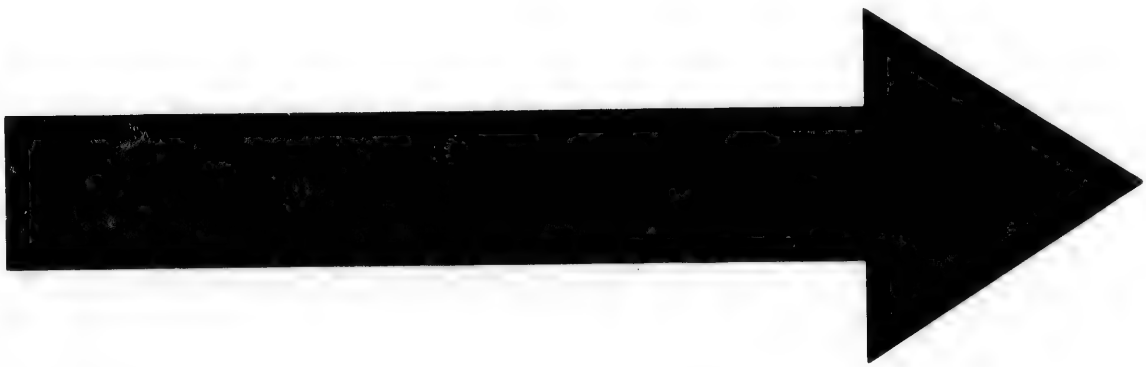

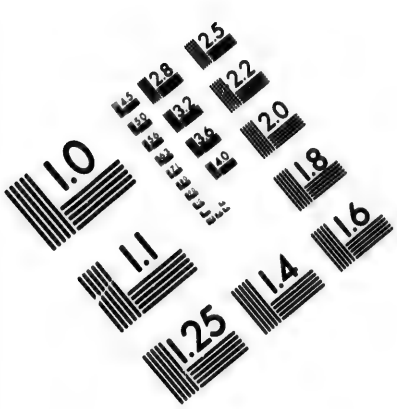

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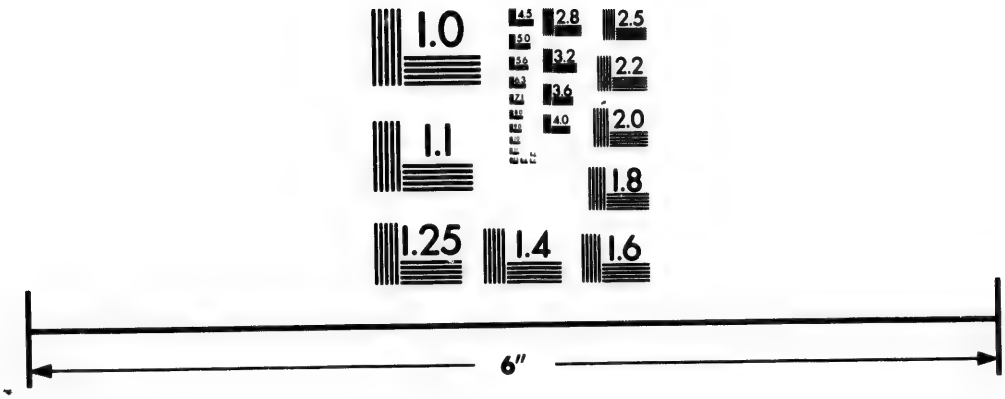

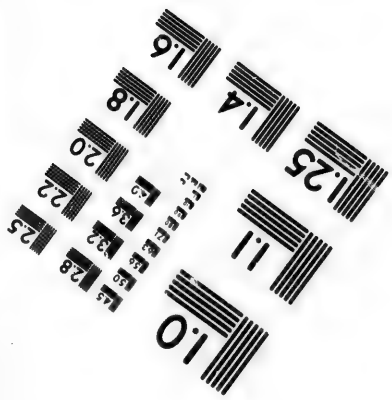

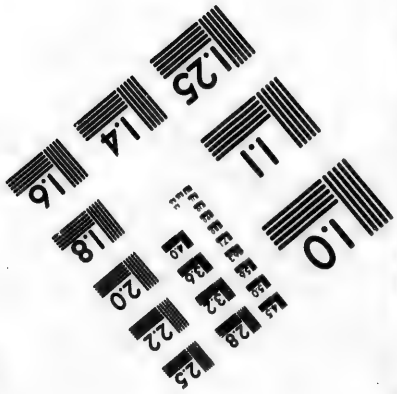

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may enrich these heathen lands, so often watered by the blood of the Evangelical laborers who have preceded us; that it may render them fertile in earnest Christians, and that it may animate the zeal of apostolical men to come and reap the abundant harvest which is offered by so many people still shrouded in the shadow of death.

Nevertheless, as it appertains only to the church to declare the names of the saints, I recommend him to your holy sacrifices, and to those of all the Fathers. And I pray you not to forget him who is with much respect, &c.

[We cannot conclude this letter without quoting from Dr. Convers Francis' Life of Rale—to which we have been indebted for many of these notes—a couple of passages, describing the present appearance of the spot on which this tragedy took place. "Whoever has visited the pleasant town of Norridgwock, as it now is, must have heard of *Indian Old Point*, as the people call the place where Rale's village stood, and perhaps curiosity may have carried him thither. If so, he has found a lovely, sequestered spot in the depth of nature's stillness, on a point around which the waters of the Kennebec, not far from their confluence with those of Sandy River, sweep on in their beautiful course, as if to the music of the rapids above; a spot over which the sad memory of the past, without its passions, will throw a charm, and on which, he will believe, the ceaseless worship of nature might blend itself with the aspirations of Christian devotion. He will find, that vestiges of the old settlement are not wanting now; that broken utensils, glass beads, and hatchets, have been turned up by the husbandman's plough, and are preserved by the people in the neighborhood; and he will turn away from the place with the feeling, that the hatefulness of the mad spirit of war is aggravated by such a connection with nature's sweet retirements."—p. 321.

"The spot on which the Norridgwock missionary fell, was marked, some time after his death, by the erection of a cross. This, it is said, in process of time, was cut down by a company of hunters. I believe it was replaced by some rude memorial in stone. But in 1833 a permanent monument was erected in honor of Rale. . . . . An acre of land was purchased, including the site of Rale's church and his grave. Over the grave, on the 23d of

August, 1833, the anniversary (according to the New Style) of the fight at Norridgwock, and just one hundred and nine years after its occurrence, the foundation was laid, and the monument raised, with much ceremony, amidst a large concourse of people. Bishop Fenwick, of Boston, directed the ceremonies, and delivered an address full of appropriate interest. Delegates from the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Canada Indians, were present on the occasion. The monument is about twenty feet high, including an iron cross, with which it is surmounted. On the south side of the base, fronting the Kennebec River, is an appropriate and somewhat long Latin inscription."—p. 329.]

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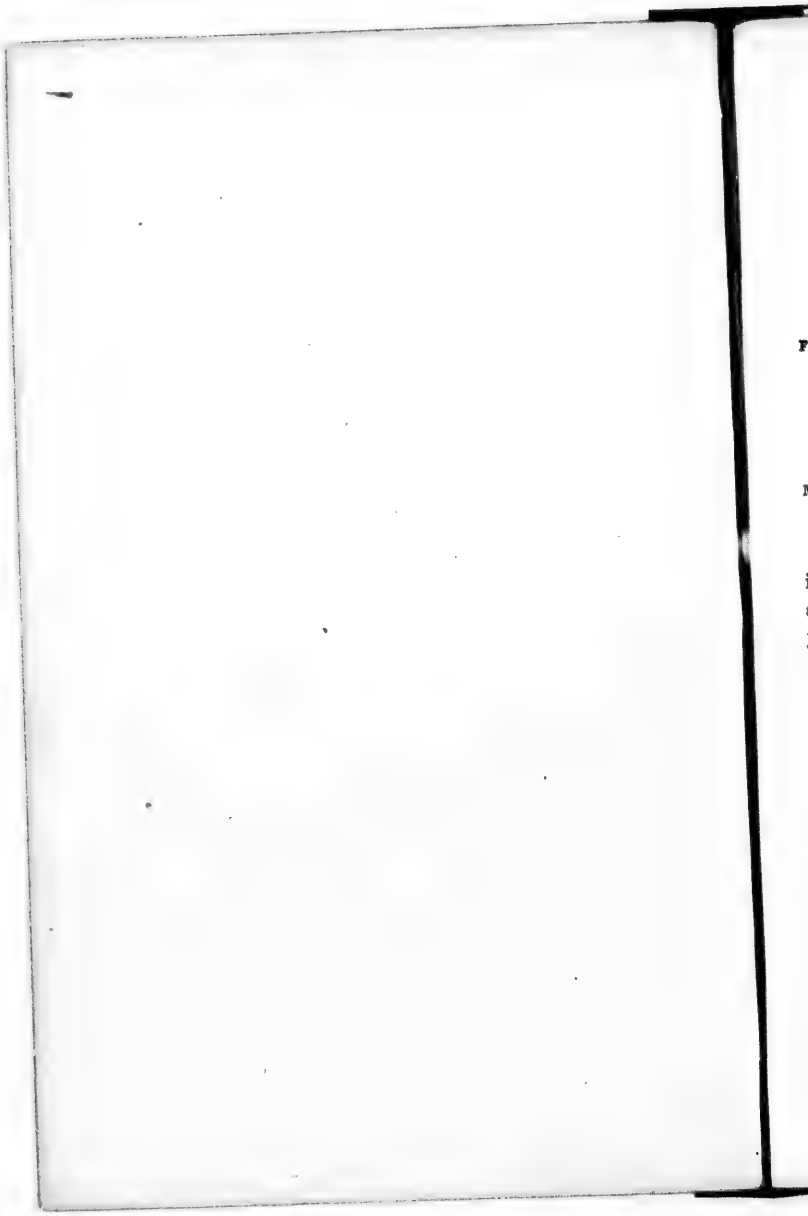
1656—1715.



LETTER IV.

FROM FATHER CHOLONEC, MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, TO FATHER AUGUSTIN LE BLANC OF THE SAME SOCIETY, PROCURATOR OF MISSIONS IN CANADA.

At Sault de St. Louis, the 27th of August, 1715.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

THE marvels which God is working every day through the intercession of a young Iroquois female who has lived and died among us in the order of sanctity, have induced me to inform you of the particulars of her life, although you have not pressed me in your letters to enter into detail. You have yourself been a witness of these marvels, when you discharged there with so much zeal the duties of a Missionary, and you know that the high Prelate who governs this church, touched by the prodigies with which God has deigned to honor the memory of this holy maiden, has with reason called her the Geneviéve of New France. All the French who are in the colonies, as well as the Indians, hold her in singular veneration. They come from a great distance to pray at her tomb, and many, by her intercession, have been immediately cured of their maladies, and have received from Heaven other extraordinary favors. I will write you nothing, my Reverend Father, which I have not myself seen during the time she was under my care, or which I have not learned of the Missionary who conferred on her the rite of holy Baptism.

Tegahkouita, (which is the name of this sainted female about

whom I am going to inform you,) was born in the year 1656, at Gandaouaguè, one of the settlements of the lower Iroquois, who are called *Agniez*. Her father was an Iroquois and a heathen; her mother, who was a Christian, was an Algonquin, and had been baptized at the village of Trois Rivieres, where she was brought up among the French. During the time that we were at war with the Iroquois, she was taken prisoner by these Indians, and remained a captive in their country. We have since learned, that thus in the very bosom of heathenism, she preserved her faith even to her death. By her marriage she had two children, one son and one daughter, the latter of whom is the subject of this narrative, but she had the pain to die without having been able to procure for them the grace of Baptism. The small-pox, which ravaged the Iroquois country, in a few days removed her husband, her son, and herself. Tegahkouita was also attacked like the others, but she did not sink as they did under the violence of the disease. Thus, at the age of four years she found herself an orphan, under the care of her aunts, and in the power of an uncle who was the leading man in the settlement.

The small-pox had injured her eyes, and this infirmity having rendered her incapable of enduring the glare of light, she remained during whole days shut up in her wigwam. By degrees she began to love this seclusion, and at length that became her taste which she had at first endured only from necessity. This inclination for retirement, so contrary to the usual spirit of the young Iroquois, was the principal cause of her preserving her innocence of life while living in such scenes of corruption.

When she was a little older, she occupied herself at home in rendering to her aunts all those services of which she was capable, and which were in accordance with her sex. She ground the corn, went in search of water, and carried the wood; for such, among these Indians, are the ordinary employments of females. The rest of her time she spent in the manufacture of little arti-

cles, for which she possessed an extraordinary skill. By this means she avoided two rocks which would have been equally fatal to her innocence—idleness, so common there among her own sex, and which is the source of an infinite number of vices; and the extreme passion they have to spend their time in gossiping visits, and to show themselves in public places where they can display their finery. For it is not necessary to believe that this kind of vanity is confined to civilized nations; the females of our Indians, and especially the young girls, have a great taste for parading their ornaments, some of which they esteem very precious. Their finery consists of cloths which they buy of the Europeans, mantles of fur, and different kinds of shells, with which they cover themselves from head to foot. They have also bracelets, and collars, and pendants for the ears and belts. They adorn even their moccasons, for these personal ornaments constitute all their riches, and it is in this way, by the different kinds of garments, that they mark their rank among themselves.

The young Tegahkouita had naturally a distaste for all this finery which was appropriate to her sex, but she could not oppose the persons who stood to her in the place of father and mother, and to please them she had sometimes recourse to these vain ornaments. But after she became a Christian, she looked back upon it as a great sin, and expiated this compliance of which she had been guilty, by a severe penance and almost continual tears.

M. de Thracy, having been sent by the government to bring to reason the Iroquois nations who laid waste our colonies, carried the war into their country and burned three villages of the Agniez. This expedition spread terror among the Indians, and they acceded to the terms of peace which were offered them. Their deputies were well received by the French, and a peace concluded to the advantage of both nations.

We availed ourselves of this occasion, which seemed a favora-

ble one, to send missionaries to the Iroquois. They had already gained some smattering of the Gospel, which had been preached to them by Father Iogues, and particularly those of Onnontagué, among whom this Father had fixed his residence. It is well known that this Missionary received there that recompense of martyrdom which well befitted his zeal. The Indians at first held him in a severe captivity and mutilated his fingers, and it was only by a kind of miracle that he was able for a time to escape their fury. It seemed however that his blood was destined to be the seed of Christianity in that heathen land, for having had the courage, in the following year, to return for the purpose of continuing his mission among these people who had treated him so inhumanly, he finished his apostolic career amid the torments they forced him to endure.* The works of his two companions were crowned by the same kind of death, and it is without doubt to the blood of these first Apostles of the Iroquois nation, that we must ascribe the blessings which God poured out

[* The History of Father Issac Iogues is full of romantic interest. He was the first to carry the cross into Michigan and among the villages of the Mohawks. On his return from the falls of St. Mary escorted by some Huron braves, they were taken by a war party of the Mohawks. His companions were all put to death with the usual attendants of savage cruelty, but not before Iogues had baptized two of them, who were neophytes, with some drops of water he found clinging to the broad blade of an ear of Indian corn they had thrown to him. After suffering every cruelty and being obliged to run the gauntlet through three villages, he was in 1642 ransomed by the Dutch at Albany and set at liberty. He then sailed for France to obtain permission from the Pope to celebrate the divine mysteries with his mutilated hands. The Pope granted his prayer, saying, "Indignum esset Christi martyrum Christi non libere sanguinem." On his return to the Mohawks for the second time, he was at once received as a prisoner and condemned to death as an enchanter. He approached the cabin where the death festival was kept, and as he entered, received the death blow. His head was hung upon the palisades of the village, and his body thrown into the Mohawk river. *Bancroft*, iii. 138.]

on the zeal of those who succeeded them in this evangelical ministry.

The Father Fremin, the Father Bruyas, and the Father Pierron, who knew the language of the country, were chosen to accompany the Iroquois deputies, and on the part of the French to confirm the peace which had been granted them. They committed also to the Missionaries the presents which the Governor made, that it might facilitate their entrance into these barbarous regions. They happened to arrive there at a time when these people are accustomed to plunge into all kinds of debauchery, and found no one therefore in a fit state to receive them. This unseasonable period however procured for the young Tegahkouita the advantage of knowing early those of whom God wished to make use, to conduct her to the highest degree of perfection. She was charged with the task of lodging the Missionaries, and attending to their wants. The modesty and sweetness with which she acquitted herself of this duty, touched her new guests, while she on her part was struck with their affable manners, their regularity in prayer, and the other exercises into which they divided the day. God even then disposed her to the grace of Baptism, which she would have requested, if the missionaries had remained longer in her village.

The third day after their arrival they were sent for to *Tionnontoquen*, where their reception was to take place: it was very pompous. Two of the missionaries established themselves in this village, while the third commenced a mission in the village of *Onneiout*, which is more than thirty leagues distant in the country. The next year they formed a third mission at *Annontagué*. The fourth was established at *Tsonnontouan*, and the fifth at the village of *Goiogoen*. The natives of the *Agniez* and the *Tsonnontouans* are very numerous, and separated in many different villages, which is the reason why they were obliged to increase the number of the missionaries.

At length Togahkouita became of a marriageable age, and her relations were anxious to find a husband for her, because, according to the custom of the country, the game which the husband kills in the chase, is appropriated to the benefit of his wife and the other members of her family. But the young Iroquois had inclinations very much opposed to the designs of her relations. She had a great love of purity, even before she knew the excellence of this virtue, and anything which could soil it ever so little, impressed her with horror. When therefore they proposed to establish her in life, she excused herself under different pretexts, alleging above all her extreme youth, and the little inclination she had to enter into marriage.

The relatives seemed to approve of these reasons; but a little while after they resolved to betroth her, when she least expected it, and without even allowing her a choice in the person to whom she was to be united. They therefore cast their eyes upon a young man whose alliance appeared desirable, and made the proposition both to him and to the members of his family. The matter being settled on both sides, the young man in the evening entered the wigwam which was destined for him, and seated himself near her. It is thus that marriages are made among the Indians; and although these heathen extend their dissoluteness and licentiousness to the greatest excess, there is yet no nation which in public guards so scrupulously that outward decorum which is the attendant of perfect modesty. A young man would be forever dishonored, if he should stop to converse publicly with a young female. Whenever marriage is in agitation, the business is to be settled by the parents, and the parties most interested are not even permitted to meet. It is sufficient that they are talking of the marriage of a young Indian with a young female, to induce them with care to shun seeing and speaking with each other. When the parents on both sides have agreed, the young man comes by night to the wigwam of his future spouse,

and seats himself near her; which is the same as declaring, that he takes her for his wife, and she takes him for her husband.

Tegahkouita appeared utterly disconcerted when she saw the young man seated by her side. She at first blushed, and then rising abruptly, went forth indignantly from the wigwam; nor would she re-enter until the young man left it. This firmness rendered her relatives outrageous. They considered that they had in this way received an insult, and resolved that they would not be disappointed. They therefore attempted other stratagems, which served only to show more clearly the firmness of their niece.

Artifice not having proved successful, they had recourse to violence. They now treated her as a slave, obliging her to do everything which was most painful and repulsive, and malignantly interpreting all her actions, even when most innocent. They reproached her without ceasing for the want of attachment to her relations, her uncouth manners, and her stupidity, for it was thus that they termed the dislike she felt to marriage. They attributed it to a secret hatred of the Iroquois nation, because she was herself of the Algonquin race. In short, they omitted no means of shaking her constancy.

The young girl suffered all this ill treatment with unwearied patience, and without ever losing anything of her equanimity of mind or her natural sweetness; she rendered them all the services they required with an attention and docility beyond her years and strength. By degrees, her relatives were softened, restored to her their kind feelings, and did not further molest her in regard to the course she had adopted.

At this very time Father Jacques de Lamberville was conducted by Providence to the village of our young Iroquois, and received orders from his superiors to remain there, although it seemed most natural that he should go on to join his brother, who had charge of the mission to the Iroquois of *Onnontagué*.

Tegahkouita did not fail to be present at the instructions and prayers which took place every day in the chapel, but she did not dare to disclose the design she had for a long time formed of becoming a Christian; perhaps, because she was restrained by fear of her uncle, in whose power she entirely was, and who, from interested motives, had joined in the opposition to the Christians; perhaps, because modesty itself rendered her too timid, and prevented her from discovering her sentiments to the missionary.

But, at length, the occasion of her declaring her desire for baptism presented itself, when she least expected it. A wound which she had received in the foot detained her in the village, whilst the greater part of the women were in the fields gathering the harvest of Indian corn. The Missionary had selected this time to go his rounds, and instruct at his leisure those who were remaining in the wigwams. He entered that of Tegahkouita. This good girl on seeing him was not able to restrain her joy. She at once began to open her heart to him, even in presence of her companions, on the earnest desire she had to be admitted into the fold of the Christians. She disclosed also the obstacles she had been obliged to surmount on the part of her family, and in this first conversation showed a courage above her sex. The goodness of her temper, the vivacity of her spirit, her simplicity and candor, caused the Missionary to believe that one day she would make great progress in virtue. He therefore applied himself particularly to instruct her in the truths of Christianity, but did not think he ought to yield so soon to her entreaties: for the grace of Baptism should not be accorded to adults, and particularly in this country, but with great care and after a long probation. All the winter therefore was employed in her instruction and a rigid investigation of her manner of life.

It is surprising, that notwithstanding the propensity these Indians have for slander, and particularly those of her own sex, the Missionary did not find any one but gave a high encomium

to the young catechumen. Even those who had persecuted her most severely were not backward in giving their testimony to her virtue. He therefore did not hesitate any longer to administer to her the holy Baptism which she asked with so much godly earnestness. She received it on Easter Day in the year 1676, and was named Catherine, and it is thus that I shall call her in the rest of this letter.

The only care of the young neophyte was now to fulfill the engagements she had contracted. She did not wish to restrict herself to the observance of common practices, for she felt that she was called to a more perfect life. Besides the public instructions, at which she was present punctually, she requested also particular ones for the regulation of her private and secret life. Her prayers, her devotions, and her penances were arranged with the utmost exactness, and she was so docile to form herself according to the plan of perfection which had been marked out for her, that in a little time she became a model of virtue.

In this manner several months passed away very peaceably. Even her relations did not seem to disapprove of the new course of life which she was leading. But the Holy Spirit has warned us by the mouth of Wisdom, that the faithful soul which begins to unite itself to God, should prepare for temptation; and this was verified in the case of Catherine. Her extraordinary virtue drew upon her the persecutions even of those who admired her. They looked upon a life so pure, as being a tacit reproach to their own irregularities, and with the design of discrediting it, they endeavored by divers artifices to throw a taint upon its purity. But the confidence which the neophyte had in God, the distrust she felt of herself, her constancy in prayer, and that delicacy of conscience which made her dread even the shadow of a sin, gave her a perfect victory over the enemies of her innocence.

The exactness with which she observed the festival days and the

Chapel, was the cause of another storm which came upon her on the part of her relations. The chaplet recited by two choirs is an exercise of these holy days; this kind of psalmody awakens the attention of the neophytes and animates their devotions. They execute the hymns and sacred canticles which our Indians chant, with much exactness and harmony, for they have a fine ear, a good voice, and a rare taste for music. Catherine never omitted this exercise. But they took it ill in the wigwam that on these days she abstained from going to work with the others in the field. At length, they came to bitter words, cast upon her the reproach, that Christianity had made her effeminate and accustomed her to an indolent life; they did not even allow her anything to eat, to oblige her, by means of famine, to follow her relations and to aid in their labor. The neophyte bore with constancy their reproach and contempt, and preferred in those days to do without nourishment, rather than violate the law which required the observance of these festivals, or to omit these ordinary practices of piety.

This firmness, which nothing could shake, irritated more and more her heathen relatives. Whenever she went to the Chapel they caused her to be followed with showers of stones by drunken people, or those who feigned to be so, so that, to avoid their insults, she was often obliged to take the most circuitous paths. This extended even to the children, who pointed their fingers at her, cried after her, and in derision called her "the Christian." One day, when she had retired to her wigwam, a young man entered abruptly, his eyes sparkling with rage, and a hatchet in his hand, which he raised as if to strike her. Perhaps he had no other design than to frighten her. But whatever might have been the Indian's intentions, Catherine contented herself with modestly bowing her head, without showing the least emotion. This intrepidity, so little expected, astonished the Indian to such

a degree, that he immediately took to flight, as if he had been himself terrified by some invisible power.

It was in such trials of her patience and piety that Catherine spent the summer and autumn which followed her baptism. The winter brought her a little more tranquillity, but nevertheless, she was not freed from suffering some crosses on the part of one of her aunts. This woman, who was of a deceitful and dangerous spirit, could not endure the regular life of her niece, and therefore constantly condemned her, even in actions and words the most indifferent. It is a custom among these Indians, that uncles give the name of daughters to their nieces, and the nieces reciprocally call their uncles by the name of father. Hence it happens, that cousin-germans are commonly called brothers. It happened, however, once or twice, that Catherine called the husband of her aunt by his proper name, and not by that of father: but it was entirely owing to mistake or want of thought. Yet this evil spirit did not need any thing farther as the foundation on which to build up a most atrocious calumny. She pretended to believe, that this manner of expressing herself, which seemed to her so familiar, was an evidence of criminal intimacy, and immediately went to seek the missionary, to decry her to him, and destroy in his mind those sentiments of esteem which he had always entertained for the neophyte. "Well!" she said, at once, "so Catherine whom you esteem so virtuous, is notwithstanding a hypocrite who deceives you. Even in my presence she solicited my husband to sin." The missionary, who understood the evil spirit of this woman, wished to know on what she founded an accusation of this kind, and having learned what had given occasion to this odious suspicion, he administered to her a severe reprimand, and sent her away utterly confounded. When he afterwards mentioned it to the neophyte, she answered him with a candor and confidence which showed the absence of all falsehood. It was on this occasion that she declared, what perhaps we should

not have known if she had not been placed on this trial, that by the kindness of the Lord she could not remember that she had ever stained the purity of her person, and that she did not fear receiving any reproach on this point in the day of judgment.

It was sad for Catherine to have to sustain so many conflicts, and to see her innocence exposed without cessation to the outrages and railleries of her countrywomen. And in other respects she had everything to fear in a country where so few of the people had imbibed a taste for the maxims of the Gospel. She, therefore, earnestly desired to be transplanted to some other mission where she might serve God in peace and liberty. This was the subject of her most fervent prayers, and it was also the advice of the missionary, but it was not easy to bring about. She was entirely in the power of an uncle, watchful of all her actions, and through the aversion he had for Christians, incapable of appreciating her resolution. But God who listens favorably even to the simple desires of those who place their trust in Him, disposed all things for the repose and consolation of the neophyte.

A colony of Iroquois had lately been formed among the French, the peace which existed between the two nations having given these Indians an opportunity of coming to hunt on our lands. Many of them stopped near the prairie of the Madeleine, where the missionaries of our society who dwelt there met them, and at different times conversed with them on the necessity of salvation. God at the same time influencing their hearts by the impressions of his grace, these Indians found themselves suddenly changed, and listened without objection to the proposition that they should renounce their country and settle among us. They received baptism after the usual instructions and probation.

The example and devotion of these new converts drew to them many of their countrymen, and in a few years the Mission of *St. Francis Xavier du Sault*, (for it was thus that it was named,) became celebrated for the great number of its neophytes and their

extraordinary fervor. If an Iroquois had made these a visit, ever so short, even though he had no other design but to see his relatives or friends, he seemed to lose entirely the desire to return to his own country. The charity of these neophytes led them even to divide with the new comers, the fields which they had cleared with much labor: but the way in which this feeling appeared to the greatest advantage was, in the eagerness they showed in instructing them in the truths of our faith. To this work they devoted entire days and even a portion of the night. Their conversations, full of unction and piety, made the most lively impression on the hearts of their guests, and transformed them, so to speak, into different beings. He who a little while before breathed of nothing but blood and war, became, softened, humble, teachable, and ready to obey the most difficult maxims of our religion.

This zeal did not restrict itself to those who came to visit them, but induced them also to make excursions into the different settlements of their nation, and they always returned accompanied by a large number of their countrymen. On the very day that Catherine received Baptism, one of the most powerful of the *Agniez* returned to the mission in company with thirty of the Iroquois of that tribe whom he had gained to Jesus Christ. The neophyte would very willingly have followed him, but she depended, as I have said before, on an uncle who did not see without sorrow the depopulation of his village, and who openly declared himself the enemy of those who thought of going to live among the French.

It was not until the following year that she obtained the facilities she wished for the execution of her design. She had an adopted sister who had retired with her husband to the Mission du Sault. The zeal of the recent converts to draw their relatives and friends to the new colony, inspired her with the same thoughts with regard to Catherine, and disclosing her designs to her hus-

band, he gave his consent. He joined himself therefore to an Indian of Loretto and some other neophytes, who under cover of going to trade in beaver-skins with the English, travelled to the villages of the Iroquois, with the intention of engaging their acquaintances to follow them, and to share in the blessings of their conversion.

With difficulty he reached the village in which Catherine lived, and informed her secretly of the object of his journey, and the desire his wife felt that she should be with her at the Mission du Sault, whose praise he set forth in a few words. As the neophyte appeared transported with joy at this disclosure, he warned her to hold herself in readiness to depart immediately on his return from his journey to the English, which he would not have made except to avoid giving umbrage to his uncle. This uncle was then absent, without having any suspicion of his niece's design. Catherine went immediately to take leave of the missionary, and to ask his recommendation to the Fathers who were over the Mission du Sault. The missionary on his part, while he could not withhold his approval of the resolution of the neophyte, exhorted her to place her trust in God, and gave her those counsels which he judged necessary in the present juncture.

As the journey of her brother-in-law was only a pretext the better to conceal his design, he almost immediately returned to the village, and the day after his arrival, departed with Catherine and the Indian of Loretto who had kept him company. It was not long before it was discovered in the village that the neophyte had disappeared, and they had no doubt but that she had followed the two Indians. They immediately therefore despatched a runner to her uncle to give him the news. The old chief, jealous of the increase of his nation, foamed with rage at the intelligence, and immediately charging his gun with three balls, he went in pursuit of those who had accompanied his niece. He made such haste that in a very short time he came up with them.

The two Indians, who had known beforehand that he would not fail to pursue them, had concealed the neophyte in a thick wood, and had stopped as if to take a little repose. The old man was very much astonished at not finding his niece with them, and after a moment's conversation, coming to the conclusion that he had credited too easily the first rumor which had been spread, he retraced his footsteps to the village. Catherine regarded this sudden retreat of her uncle as one effect of the protection of God which she enjoyed, and continuing her route she arrived at the Mission du Sault, in the end of autumn of the year 1677.

She took up her abode with the family of her brother-in-law. The cabin belonged to one of the most fervent Christians in the place, named Anastasia, whose care it was to instruct those of her own sex who aspired to the grace of baptism. The zeal with which she discharged her duty in this employment, her conversations, and her example, charmed Catherine. But what edified her exceedingly was the piety of all the converts who composed this numerous mission. Above all, she was struck with seeing men become so different from what they were when they lived in their own country. She compared their exemplary life with the licentious course they had been accustomed to lead, and recognizing the hand of God in so extraordinary a change, she ceaselessly thanked Him for having conducted her into this land of blessings.

To make a suitable return for these favors from Heaven, she felt that she ought to give herself up entirely to God, without having any reserve, or permitting any thought of herself. The consecrated place became, thenceforth, all her delight. She repaired thither at four o'clock in the morning, attended the Mass at the dawn of day, and afterwards assisted at that of the Indians, which was said at sunrise. During the course of the day she from time to time broke off from her work to go and hold communion with Jesus Christ at the foot of the altar. In the

evening she returned again to the church, and did not leave it until the night was far advanced. When engaged in her prayers, she seemed entirely unconscious of what was passing without, and in a short time the Holy Spirit raised her to so sublime a devotion, that she often spent many hours in intimate communion with God.

To this inclination for prayer, she joined an almost unceasing application to labor. She sustained herself in her toils by the pious conversations which she held with Anastasia, that fervent Christian of whom I have already spoken, and with whom she had formed a most intimate friendship. The topics on which they most generally talked were, the delight they received in the service of God, the means of pleasing him and advancing in virtue, the peculiar traits seen in the lives of the saints, the horror they should have of sin, and the care with which they should expiate by penitence those they had the misfortune to commit. She always ended the week by an exact investigation of her faults and imperfections, that she might efface them by the sacrament of penance, which she underwent every Saturday evening. For this she prepared herself by different mortifications with which she afflicted her body, and when she accused herself of faults even the most light, it was with such vivid feelings of compunction, that she shed tears and her words were choked by sighs and sobbings. The lofty idea she had of the majesty of God made her regard the least offence with horror, and when any had escaped her, she seemed not able to pardon herself for its commission.

Virtues so marked did not permit me for a very long time to refuse her the permission which she so earnestly desired, that on the approaching festival of Christmas she should receive her first communion. This is a privilege which is not accorded to those who come to reside among the Iroquois, until after some years of probation and many trials; but the piety of Catherine placed her

beyond the ordinary rules. She participated, for the first time in her life, in the holy Eucharist, with a degree of fervor proportioned to the reverence she had for this grace, and the earnestness with which she had desired to obtain it. And on every subsequent occasion on which she approached the holy sacrament, it was always with the same disposition. Her manner alone inspired the most lukewarm with devotion, and when a general communion was about to take place, the most virtuous neophytes endeavored with emulation to be near her, because, said they, the sight alone of Catherine served them for an excellent preparation for communing worthily.

After the festival of Christmas, it being the proper season for the chase, she was not able to excuse herself from following her sister and brother-in-law into the forests. She then made it apparent, that one is able to serve God in all places where his providence calls him. She did not relax any of her ordinary exercises, while her piety even suggested to her holy practices to substitute in place of those which were incompatible with a residence in the forests. There was a time set apart for every thing. In the morning she applied herself to her prayers, and concluded with those which the Indians make in common according to their custom, and in the evening she renewed them again, continuing until the night was far advanced. While the Indians were partaking of their repast to prepare themselves to endure the chase through the whole day, she retired to some secret place to offer up her devotions; as this was a little before the time when they were accustomed to hear Mass at the Mission. She had fixed a cross in the trunk of a tree which she found by the side of a stream, and this solitary spot was her oratory. There, she placed herself in spirit at the foot of the altar, she united her soul with that of the priest, she prayed her guardian angel to be present for her at that holy sacrifice, and to apply to her its benefits. The rest of the day she spent in laboring with the others of her

sex, but to banish all frivolous discourse and preserve her union with God, she always introduced some religious conversation, or perhaps invited them to sing hymns or anthems in praise of their Lord. Her repasts were very simple, and often she did not eat till the end of the day. At other times, she secretly mixed ashes with the food provided for her, to deprive it of everything which might afford pleasure to the taste. This is a self-mortification which she always practised, when she could do so without being seen.

This sojourn in the forests was not very agreeable to Catherine, although generally pleasant to the Indian women, because, freed from domestic cares, they pass their time in amusements and feasting. She longed without ceasing for the time to arrive, when they are accustomed to return to the village. The Church, the presence of Jesus Christ in the august Sacrament of the Altar, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the frequent exhortations, and the other exercises of the Mission, of which she was deprived while engaged in the chase—these were the only objects which interested her. She had no taste for anything else. She therefore formed the determination, that if she lived to return once more to the Mission, she would never again leave it. She arrived there near the time of Passion Week, and for the first time assisted in the ceremonies of those holy days.

I shall not stop, my Reverend Father, to describe to you here how deeply she was affected by a spectacle so touching as that of the sorrows and death of a God for the safety of men. She shed tears almost continually, and formed the resolution to bear, for the rest of her days, in her own body, the Cross of Jesus Christ. From that time she sought all occasions of self-mortification, perhaps to expiate those light faults which she regarded as so many outrages against the Divine Majesty, perhaps to trace in her the image of a God crucified for love of us. The conversations of Anastasia, who often talked with her of the pains of Hell,

and the severity which the saints exercised upon themselves, strengthened the desire she had for the austerities of penance. She found herself also animated to this course by an accident which placed her in great danger of losing her life. She was cutting a tree in the woods, which fell sooner than she expected; she had sufficient time, by drawing back, to shun the body of the tree, which would have crushed her by its fall; but she was not able to escape from one of the branches, which struck her violently on the head, and threw her senseless to the ground. She shortly afterwards recovered from her swoon, and those around heard her softly ejaculating, "I thank thee, O good Jesus, for having succored me in this danger." She did not doubt but that God had preserved her to give her time to expiate her sins by repentance. This she declared to a companion, who felt herself called, like Catherine, to a life of austerity, and with whom she was in so close an intimacy that they communicated to each other the most secret things which took place in their innermost souls. This new association had indeed so much influence on the life of Catherine, that I cannot refrain from speaking of it.

Therese (it is thus that she was named) had been baptized by Father Bruyas in the Iroquois country; but the licentiousness which prevailed among her people, and the evil example she always had before her eyes, caused her shortly to forget the vows of her baptism. Even a sojourn which she made after some time at the Mission, where she had come to live with his family, only produced a partial change in her life. A most strange adventure, however, which happened to her, operated at last to her conversion.

She had gone with her husband and a young nephew to the chase, near the river of the *Outaouacks*. On their way some other Indians joined them, and they made a company of eleven persons, that is, four men and four women, with three young persons. Therese was the only Christian. The snow, which this

year fell very late, prevented them from having any success in hunting, their provisions were in a short time consumed, and they were reduced to eat some skins, which they had brought with them to make moccasons. At length they eat the moccasons themselves, and finally, pressed by hunger, were obliged to sustain their lives principally by herbs and the bark of trees. In the meantime the husband of Therese fell dangerously ill, and the hunters were obliged to halt. Two among them, an *Agnié* and a *Tsonnontorian*, asked leave of the party to make an excursion to some distance in search of game, promising to return at the farthest in ten days. The *Agnié*, indeed, returned at the time appointed, but he came alone, and reported that the *Tsonnontouan* had perished by famine and misery. They suspected him of having murdered his companion, and then fed upon his flesh; for, although he declared that he had not found any game, he was nevertheless in full strength and health. A few days afterwards the husband of Therese died, experiencing in his last moments deep regret that he had not received baptism. The remainder of the company then resumed their journey, to attempt to reach the bank of the river and gain the French settlements. After two or three days' march, they became so enfeebled by want of nourishment, that they were not able to advance farther. Desperation then inspired them with a strange resolution, which was, to put some of their number to death, that the lives of the rest might be preserved. They, therefore, selected the wife of the Tsonnontouan and her two children, who were thus in succession devoured. This spectacle terrified Therese, for she had good reason to fear the same treatment. Then she reflected on the deplorable state in which conscience told her she was; she repented bitterly that she had ever entered the forest without having first purified herself by a full confession; she asked pardon of God for the disorders of her life, and promised to confess as soon as possible and undergo penance. Her prayer was heard,

and after incredible fatigues, she reached the village with four others, who alone remained of the company. She did, indeed, fulfil one part of the promise, for she confessed herself soon after her return, but she was more backward to reform her life and subject herself to the rigors of penance.

One day, while she was looking at the new Church they were building at the Sault, after they had removed thither the mission which before had been at the prairie of the Madeleine, she met with Catharine, who was also inspecting it. They saluted each other for the first time, and entering into conversation, Catherine asked her, which portion of the Church was to be set apart for the females. Therese pointed out the place which she thought would be appropriated to them. "Alas!" answered Catherine, with a sigh, "it is not in this material temple that God most loves to dwell. It is within ourselves that He wishes to take up His abode. Our hearts are the Temple which is most agreeable to Him. But, miserable being that I am, how many times have I forced Him to abandon this heart in which He should reign alone! And do I not deserve, that to punish me for my ingratitude, they should forever exclude me from this temple which they are raising to His glory?"

The humility of these sentiments deeply touched the heart of Therese. At the same time, she felt herself pressed by remorse of conscience to fulfil what she had promised to the Lord, and she did not doubt but that God had directed to her this holy female, to support her by her counsels and example in the new kind of life she wished to embrace. She therefore opened her heart to Catherine on the holy desires with which God had inspired her, and insensibly the conversation led them to disclose to each other their most secret thoughts. To converse with greater ease they went and sat at the foot of a cross which was erected on the banks of the River St. Lawrence. This first interview, which revealed the uniformity of their sentiments and

inclinations, began to strengthen the bonds of a holy friendship which lasted even to the death of Catherine. From this time they were inseparable. They went together to the Church, to the forest, and to their daily labor. They animated each other to the service of God by their religious conversations—they mutually communicated their pains and dislikes—they disclosed their faults—they encouraged each other to the practice of austere virtues—and thus were mutually of infinite service in advancing more and more in their views of perfection.

It was thus that God prepared Catherine for a new contest which her love of celibacy obliged her to undergo. Interested views inspired her sister with the design of marrying her. She supposed there was not a young man then in the Mission du Sault, who would not be ambitious of the honor of being united to so virtuous a female, and that thus having the whole village from which to make her choice, she would be able to select for her brother-in-law some able hunter who would bring abundance to the cabin. She expected indeed to meet with difficulties on the part of Catherine, for she she was not ignorant of the persecutions this generous girl had already suffered, and the constancy with which she had sustained them, but she persuaded herself that the force of reason would finally vanquish her opposition. She selected therefore a particular day, and after having shown Catherine even more affection than ordinary, she addressed her with that eloquence which is natural to these Indians, when they are engaged in anything which concerns their interests.

"I must confess, my dear sister," said she, with a manner full of sweetness and affability, "you are under great obligations to the Lord for having brought you, as well as ourselves, from our unhappy country, and for having conducted you to the Mission du Sault, where everything is favorable to your piety. If you are rejoiced to be here, I have no less satisfaction at having you with me. You every day indeed increase our pleasure

by the wisdom of your conduct, which draws upon you general esteem and approbation. There only remains one thing for you to do to complete our happiness, which is to think seriously of establishing yourself by a good and judicious marriage. All the young girls among us take this course; you are of an age to act as they do, and you are bound to do so even more particularly than others, either to shun the occasions of sin, or to supply the necessities of life. It is true that it is a source of great pleasure to us, both to your brother-in-law and myself, to furnish these things for you, but you know that he is in the decline of life, and that we are charged with the care of a large family. If you were to be deprived of us, to whom could you have recourse? Think of these things, Catherine; provide for yourself a refuge from the evils which accompany poverty; and determine as soon as possible to prepare to avoid them, while you can do it so easily, and in a way so advantageous both to yourself and to our family."

There was nothing which Catherine less expected than a proposition of this kind, but the kindness and respect she felt for her sister induced her to conceal her pain, and she contented herself with merely answering, that she thanked her for this advice, but the step was of great consequence and she would think of it seriously. It was thus that she warded off the first attack. She immediately came to seek me, to complain bitterly of these importunate solicitations of her sister. As I did not appear to accede entirely to her reasoning, and, for the purpose of proving her, dwelt on those considerations which ought to incline her to marriage, "Ah, my father," said she, "I am not any longer my own. I have given myself entirely to Jesus Christ, and it is not possible for me to change masters. The poverty with which I am threatened gives me no uneasiness. So little is requisite to supply the necessities of this wretched life, that my labor can furnish this, and I can always find some miserable rags to cover

me." I sent her away, saying, that she should think well on the subject, for it was one which merited the most serious attention.

Scarcely had she returned to the cabin, when her sister, impatient to bring her over to her views, pressed her anew to end her wavering by forming an advantageous settlement. But finding from the reply of Catherine, that it was useless to attempt to change her mind, she determined to enlist Anastasia in her interests, since they both regarded her as their mother. In this she was successful. Anastasia was readily induced to believe that Catherine had too hastily formed her resolution, and therefore employed all that influence which age and virtue gave her over the mind of the young girl, to persuade her that marriage was the only part she ought to take.

This measure however, had no greater success than the other, and Anastasia, who had always until that time found so much docility in Catherine, was extremely surprised at the little deference she paid to her counsels. She even bitterly reproached her, and threatened to bring her complaints to me. Catherine anticipated her in this, and after having related the pains they forced her to suffer to induce her to adopt a course so little to her taste, she prayed me to aid her in consummating the sacrifice she wished to make of herself to Jesus Christ, and to provide her a refuge from the opposition she had to undergo from Anastasia and her sister. I praised her design, but at the same time advised her to take yet three days to deliberate on an affair of such importance, and during that time to offer up extraordinary prayers that she might be better taught the will of God; after which, if she still persisted in her resolution, I promised her to put an end to the importunities of her relatives. She at first acquiesced in what I proposed, but in less than a quarter of an hour came back to seek me. "It is settled," said she, as she came near me; "it is not a question for deliberation; my part has long since been taken. No,

my Father, I can have no other spouse but Jesus Christ." I thought that it would be wrong for me any longer to oppose a resolution which seemed to me inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore exhorted her to perseverance, assuring her that I would undertake her defence against those who wished henceforth to disturb her on that subject. This answer restored her former tranquillity of mind, and reëstablished in her soul that inward peace which she preserved even to the end of her life.

Scarcely had she gone, when Anastasia came to complain in her turn, that Catherine would not listen to any advice, but followed only her own whims. She was running on in this strain, when I interrupted her by saying that I was acquainted with the cause of her dissatisfaction, but was astonished that a Christian as old as she was, could disapprove of an action which merited the highest praise, and that if she had faith, she ought to know the value of a state so sublime as that of celibacy, which rendered feeble men like to the angels themselves. At these words Anastasia seemed to be in a perfect dream, and as she possessed a deeply seated devotion of spirit, she almost immediately began to turn the blame upon herself; she admired the courage of this virtuous girl, and at length became the foremost to fortify her in the holy resolution she had taken. It was thus that God turned these different contradictions to be a benefit to his servant. And it also furnished Catherine with a new motive to serve God with greater fervor. She therefore added new practices to the ordinary exercises of piety. Feeble as she was, she redoubled her diligence in labor, her watchings, fastings, and other austerities.

It was then the end of autumn, when the Indians are accustomed to form their parties to go out to hunt during the winter in the forests. The sojourn which Catherine had already made there, and the pain she had suffered at being deprived of the religious privileges she possessed in the village, had induced her to form the resolution, as I have already mentioned, that she would

never during her life return there. I thought however that the change of air, and the diet, which is so much better in the forest, would be able to restore her health, which was now very much impaired. It was for this reason that I advised her to follow the family and others who went to the hunting grounds. She answered me in that deeply devotional manner which was so natural to her, "It is true, my Father, that my body is served most luxuriously in the forest, but the soul languishes there, and is not able to satisfy its hunger. On the contrary, in the village the body suffers; I am contented that it should be so, but the soul finds its delight in being near to Jesus Christ. Well then, I will willingly abandon this miserable body to hunger and suffering, provided that my soul may have its ordinary nourishment."

She remained therefore during the winter in the village, where she lived only on Indian corn, and was subjected indeed to much suffering. But not content with allowing her body only this insipid food, which could scarcely sustain it, she subjected it also to austerities and excessive penances, without taking counsel of any one, persuading herself that while the object was self-mortification, she was right in giving herself up to everything which could increase her fervor. She was incited to these holy exercises by the noble examples of self-mortification which she always had before her eyes. The spirit of penance reigned among the Christians at the Sault. Fastings, discipline carried even unto blood, belts lined with points of iron—these were their most common austerities. And some of them, by these voluntary macerations, prepared themselves, when the time came, to suffer the most fearful torments.

The war was once more rekindled between the French and the Iroquois, and the latter invited their countrymen who were at the Mission du Sault to return to their own country, where they promised them entire liberty in the exercise of their religion.

The refusal with which these offers were met transported them with fury, and the Christian Indians who remained at the Sault were immediately declared enemies of their nation. A party of Iroquois surprised some of them while hunting, and carried them away to their country, where they were burned by a slow fire. But these noble and faithful men, even in the midst of the most excruciating torments, preached Jesus Christ to those who were torturing them so cruelly, and conjured them, as soon as possible, to embrace Christianity, to deliver themselves from eternal fires. One in particular among them, named Etienne, signalized his constancy and faith. When environed by the burning flames, he did not cease to encourage his wife, who was suffering the same torture, to invoke with him the holy name of Jesus. Being on the point of expiring, he rallied all his strength, and in imitation of his Master, prayed the Lord with a loud voice for the conversion of those who had treated him with such inhumanity. Many of the savages, touched by a spectacle so new to them, abandoned their country and came to the Mission du Sault, to ask for baptism, and live there in accordance with the laws of the Gospel.

The women were not behind their husbands in the ardor they showed for a life of penance. They even went to such extremes, that when it came to our knowledge, we were obliged to moderate their zeal. Besides the ordinary instruments of mortification which they employed, they had a thousand new inventions to inflict suffering upon themselves. Some placed themselves in the snow when the cold was most severe; others stripped themselves to the waist in retired places, and remained a long time exposed to the rigor of the season, on the banks of a frozen river, and where the wind was blowing with violence. There were even those who, after having broken the ice in the ponds, plunged themselves in up to the neck, and remained there as long as it was necessary for them to recite many times the ten beads of their rosary. One of them did this three nights in succession;

and it was the cause of so violent a fever, that it was thought she would have died of it. Another one surprised me extremely by her simplicity. I learned that, not content with having herself used this mortification, she had also plunged her daughter, but three years old, into the frozen river, from which she drew her out half dead. When I sharply reproached her indiscretion, she answered me with a surprising *naïveté*, that she did not think she was doing anything wrong, but that knowing her daughter would one day certainly offend the Lord, she had wished to impose on her in advance the pain which her sin merited.

Although those who inflicted these mortifications on themselves were particular to conceal them from the knowledge of the public, yet Catherine, who had a mind quick and penetrating, did not fail from various appearances to conjecture that which they held so secret, and as she studied every means to testify more and more her love to Jesus Christ, she applied herself to examine everything that was done pleasing to the Lord, that she might herself immediately put it in practice. It was for this reason that while passing some days at Montreal, where for the first time she saw the nuns, she was so charmed with their modesty and devotion, that she informed herself most thoroughly with regard to the manner in which these holy sisters lived, and the virtues which they practiced. Having learned that they were Christian virgins, who were consecrated to God by a vow of perpetual continence, she gave me no peace until I had granted her permission to make the same sacrifice of herself, not by a simple resolution to guard her virginity, such as she had already made, but by an irrevocable engagement which obliged her to belong to God without any recall. I would not, however, give my consent to this step until I had well proved her, and been anew convinced that it was the spirit of God acting in this excellent girl, which had thus inspired her with a design of which there had never been an example among the Indians.

For this great event she chose the day on which we celebrate the Festival of the Annunciation of the most holy Virgin. The moment after she had received our Lord in the holy Communion, she pronounced with admirable fervor the vow she had made of perpetual virginity. She then addressed the Holy Virgin, for whom she had a most tender devotion, praying her to present to her son the oblation of herself which she had just made; after which she passed some hours at the foot of the altar in holy meditation and in perfect union with God.

From that time Catherine seemed to be entirely divorced from this world, and she aspired continually to Heaven, where she had fixed all her desires. She seemed even to taste in anticipation the sweetness of that heavenly state; but her body was not sufficiently strong to sustain the weight of her austerities, and the constant effort of her spirit to maintain itself in the presence of God. She was at length seized with a violent illness, from which she never entirely recovered. There always remained an affection of the stomach, accompanied by frequent vomiting, and a slow fever, which undermined her constitution by degrees, and threw her into a weakness which insensibly wasted her away. It was, however, evident that her soul acquired new strength in proportion as her body decayed. The nearer she approached the termination of her career, the more clearly she shone forth in all those virtues which she had practiced with so much edification. But I need not stop here to particularize them to you, except to mention a few of those which made the most impression and were the source and spring of all the others.

She had a most tender love for God. Her only pleasure seemed to be, to keep herself in contemplation in his presence, to meditate on His majesty and mercy, to sing His praises. and continually to desire new ways of pleasing Him. It was principally to prevent distraction from other thoughts that she so often withdrew into solitude. Anastasia and Therese were the only

two Christians with whom she wished much to associate, because they talked most of God, and their conversations breathed nothing but divine love.

From thence arose the peculiar devotion she had for the Holy Eucharist and the Passion of our Saviour. These two mysteries of the love of the same God, concealed under the veil of the Eucharist and His dying on the cross, ceaselessly occupied her spirit, and kindled in her heart the purest flames of love. Every day she was seen to pass whole hours at the foot of the altar, immoveable as if transported beyond herself. Her eyes often explained the sentiments of her breast by the abundance of tears she shed, and in these tears she found so great delight that she was, as it were, insensible to the most severe cold of winter. Often seeing her benumbed with cold, I have sent her to the cabin to warm herself; she obeyed immediately, but the moment after returned to the Church, and continued there in long communion with Jesus Christ.

To keep alive her devotion for the mystery of our Saviour's Passion, and to have it always present to her mind, she carried on her breast a little crucifix which I had given her. She often kissed it with feelings of the most tender compassion for the suffering Jesus, and with the most vivid remembrance of the benefits of our redemption. One day wishing particularly to honor Jesus Christ in this double mystery of His love, after having received the Holy Communion, she made a perpetual oblation of her soul to Jesus in the Eucharist, and of her body to Jesus attached to the cross; and thenceforth, she was ingenious to imagine every day new ways of afflicting and crucifying her flesh.

During the winter, while she was in the forest with her companions, she would follow them at a distance, taking off her shoes and walking with her naked feet over the ice and snow. Having heard Anastasia say, that of all torments that of fire was the most frightful, and that the constancy of the martyrs who had suffered

this torture would be a great merit with the Lord, the following night she burned her feet and limbs with a hot brand, very much in the same way that the Indians mark their slaves, persuading herself that by this action she had declared herself the slave of her Saviour. At another time she strewed the mat on which she slept with large thorns, the points of which were very sharp, and after the example of the holy and thrice happy Saint Louis de Gonzague, she rolled herself for three nights in succession on these thorns, which caused her the most intense pain. In consequence of these things her countenance was entirely wasted and pale, which those around her attributed to illness. But Therese, the companion whom she had taken so much into her confidence, having discovered the reason of this extraordinary paleness, aroused her scruples by declaring, that she might offend God if she inflicted such austerities on herself without the permission of her Confessor. Catherine, who trembled at the very appearance of sin, came immediately to find me, to confess her fault and demand pardon of God. I blamed her indiscretion, and directed her to throw the thorns into the fire. She did so immediately, for she had an implicit submission to the judgment of those who directed her conscience, and enlightened as she was by that illumination with which God favored her, she never manifested the least attachment to her own will.

Her patience was the proof of all her acquirements. In the midst of her continual infirmities, she always preserved a peace and serenity of spirit which charmed us. She never forgot herself either to utter a complaint or give the slightest sign of impatience. During the last two months of her life her sufferings were extraordinary. She was obliged to remain night and day in the same position, and the least movement caused her the most intense pain. But when these pains were felt with the greatest severity, then she seemed most content, esteeming herself happy, as she

herself said, to live and to die on the Cross, uniting her sufferings to those of her Saviour.

As she was full of faith, she had a high idea of everything relating to religion, and this inspired her with a particular respect for those whom God called to the holy ministry. Her hope was firm, her love disinterested, serving God for the sake of God himself, and influenced only by the desire to please Him. Her devotion was tender, even to tears, her communion with God intimate and uninterrupted, never losing sight of Him in all her actions, and it was this which raised her in so short a time to so sublime a state of piety.

In short, there was nothing more remarkable in Catherine than this angelical purity, of which she was so jealous, and which she preserved even to her latest breath. It was indeed a miracle of grace, that a young Iroquois should have had so strong an attachment to a virtue so little known in her own country, and that she should have lived in such innocence of life during twenty years that she remained in the very midst of licentiousness and dissoluteness. It was this love of purity which produced in her heart so tender an affection for the Queen of Virgins. Catherine could never speak of Our Lady but with transport. She had learned by heart her Litanies, and recited them all, particularly in the evening, after the common-prayers of the cabin. She always carried with her a rosary, which she recited many times in the course of the day. The Saturdays and other days which are particularly consecrated to her honor, she devoted to extraordinary austerities, and devoted herself to the practical imitation of some of her virtues. She redoubled her fervor when they celebrated one of these Festivals, and she selected such holy days to offer to God some new sacrifice, or to renew those which she had already made.

It was to be expected that so holy a life would be followed by a most happy death. And so it was in the last moments of her life, that she edified us most by the practice of her virtues, and

above all by her patience and union with God. She found herself very ill towards the time that the men are accustomed to go out to the hunting grounds in the forest, and when the females are occupied from morning even till evening in the fields. Those who are ill are therefore obliged to remain alone through the whole day in their cabins, a plate of Indian corn and a little water having in the morning been placed near their mat. It was in this abandonment that Catherine passed all the time of her last illness. But what would have overwhelmed another person with sadness, contributed rather to increase her joy by furnishing her with something to increase her merit. Accustomed to commune alone with God, she turned this solitude to her profit, and made it serve to attach her more to her Creator by her prayers and fervent meditations.

Nevertheless, the time of her last struggle approached and her strength each day diminished. She failed considerably during the Tuesday of Holy Week, and I therefore thought it well to administer to her the Holy Communion, which she recieved with her usual feelings of devotion. I wished also at the same time to give her Extreme Unction, but she told me there was as yet no pressing necessity, and from what she said I thought I would defer it till the next morning. The rest of that day and the following night she passed in fervent communion with our Lord and the Holy Virgin. On Wednesday morning she received Extreme Unction with the same feelings of devotion, and at three hours after mid-day, after having pronounced the holy names of Jesus and Mary, a slight spasm came on, when she entirely lost the power of speech. As she preserved a perfect consciousness even to her last breath, I perceived that she was striving to perform inwardly all the acts which I suggested to her. After a short half hour of agony, she peaceably expired, as if she was only falling into a sweet sleep.

Thus died Catherine Tegahkouita in the twenty-fourth year

of her age, having filled the Mission with the odor of her sanctity and the character of holiness which she left behind her. Her countenance, which had been extremely attenuated by the maladies and constant austerities, appeared so changed and pleasant some moments after her death, that the Indians who were present were not able to restrain the expression of their astonishment, and declared, that a beam of that glory she had gone to possess was even reflected back on her body. Two Frenchmen who had come from the prairie of the Madeleine to assist in the services of Thursday morning, seeing her extended on her mat with her countenance so fresh and sweet, said one to the other, "See how peaceably that young female sleeps!" But they were very much surprised when they learned a moment after, that it was the body of Catherine who had just expired. They immediately retraced their steps, and casting themselves on their knees at her feet, recommended themselves to her prayers. They even wished to give a public evidence of the veneration they had for the deceased, by immediately assisting to make the coffin which was to enclose those holy relics.

I make use of this expression, my Reverend Father, with the greater confidence, because God did not delay to honor the memory of this virtuous girl by an infinite number of miraculous cures, which took place after her death, and which still continue to take place daily through her intercession. This is a fact well known, not only to the Indians, but also to the French at Quebec and Montreal, who often make pilgrimages to her tomb to fulfil their vows, or to return thanks for favors which she has obtained for them in Heaven. I could here relate to you a great number of these miraculous cures, which have been attested by individuals the most enlightened, and whose probity is above suspicion; but I will content myself with making you acquainted with the testimony of two persons remarkable for virtue and merit, who having themselves proved the power of this sainted female with

God, felt they were bound to leave a public monument for posterity, to satisfy at the same time their piety and their gratitude.

The first testimonial is that of M. de la Colombière, Canon of the Cathedral of Quebec, Grand-Vicar of the Diocese. He expresses himself in these terms:

"Having been ill at Quebec during the past year, from the "month of January even to the month of June, of a slow fever, "against which all remedies had been tried in vain, and of a "diarrhœa, which even ipecacuana could not cure, it was thought "well that I should record a vow, in case it should please God to "relieve me of these two maladies, to make a pilgrimage to the "Mission of St. Francis Xavier, to pray at the tomb of Catherine Tegahkouita. On the very same day the fever ceased, and "the diarrhœa having become better, I embarked some days afterwards to fulfil my vow. Scarcely had I accomplished one "third of my journey, when I found myself perfectly cured. As "my health is something so very useless that I should not have "dared to ask for it, if I had not felt myself obliged to do so by "the deference which I ought to have for the servants of the "Lord, it is impossible reasonably to withhold the belief, that "God in according to me this grace, had no other view than to "make known the credit which this excellent maiden had with "Him. For myself I should fear that I was unjustly withholding the truth, and refusing to the Missions of Canada "the glory which is due to them, if I did not testify as I have "now done, that I am a debtor for my cure to this Iroquois virgin. It is for this reason that I have given the present attestation with every sentiment of gratitude of which I am capable, to increase, as far as is in my power, the confidence which "is felt in my benefactress, but still more to excite the desire to "to imitate her virtues. Given at Villemarie, the 14th of September, 1696.

"J. DE LA COLOMBIERE, P. J.,
"Canon of the Cathedral of Quebec."

The second testimonial is from M. du Luth, Captain in the Marine Corps, and Commander of Fort Frontinac. It is thus that he speaks:

"I, the subscriber, certify to all whom it may concern, that "having been tormented by the gout for the space of twenty- "three years, and with such severe pains that it gave me no rest "for the space of three months at a time, I addressed myself to "Catherine Tegahkouita, an Iroquois virgin, deceased at the "Sault Saint Louis in the reputation of sanctity, and I promised "her to visit her tomb, if God should give me health through her "intercession. I have been so perfectly cured, at the end of one "novena* which I made in her honor, that after five months I "have not perceived the slightest touch of my gout. Given at "Fort Frontinac, this 15th of August, 1696.

"J. DU LUTH,

"Capt. of the Marine Corps, Commander of Fort Frontinac."

I have thought that a narrative of the virtues of this holy female, born thus in the midst of heathenism and among savages, would serve to edify those who having been born in the bosom of Christianity, have also every possible aid in raising themselves to the height of holiness.

I have the honor to be, &c.

[* A novena is a course of devotional services extending through nine days.]

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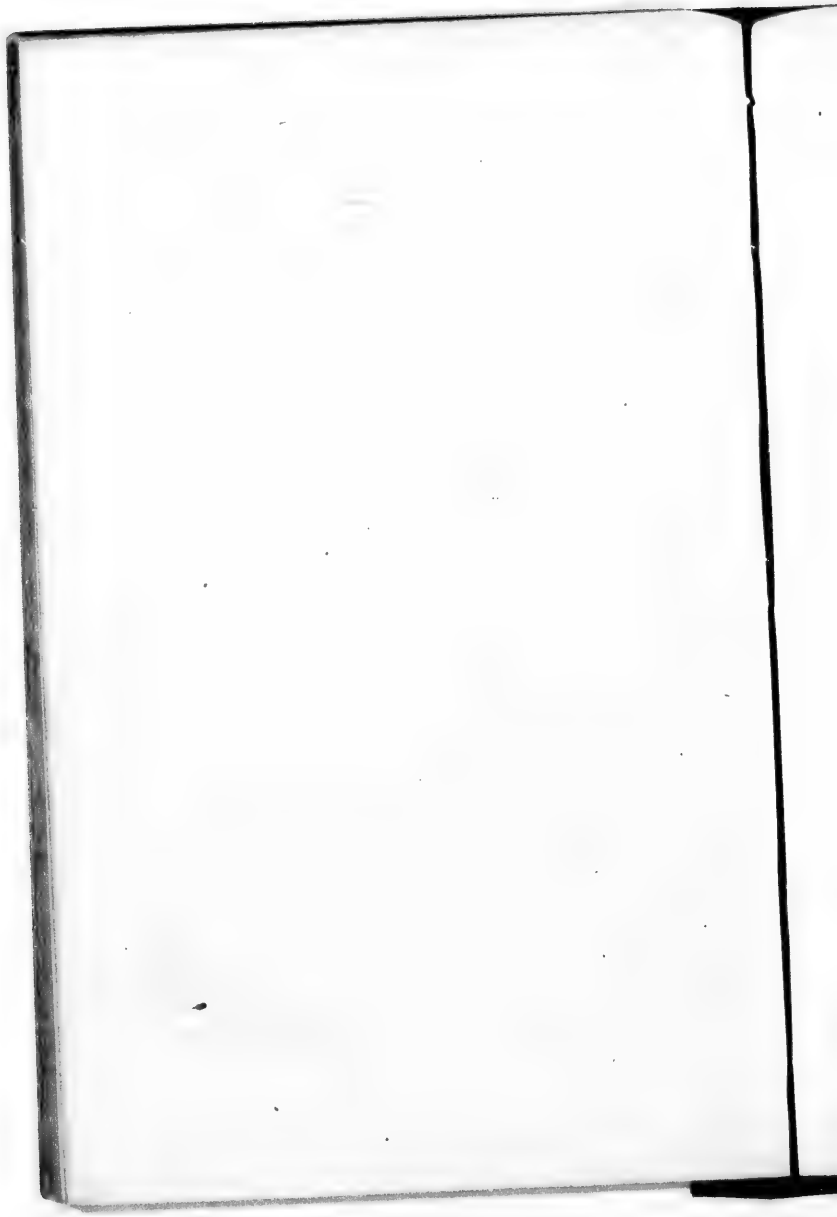
THE IROQUOIS MARTYRS.

1688—1693.



LETTER V.

FROM FATHER CHOLLONEC, MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN NEW FRANCE, TO FATHER JEAN-BAPTISTE DU HALDE OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

I HAVE learned with much consolation that you have been edified in France by the account which I sent of the virtues of a young Iroquois virgin, who died here in the odor of sanctity, and whom we regard as the Protectress of this colony. It is the mission of St. Francis Xavier du Sault which trained her to Christianity, and the impressions which such examples have left there still remain, and will remain for a long time, as we hope, through the mercy of God. Long before it occurred, she had predicted the glorious death of some Christians of this Mission, and we have reason to believe that she is the one who, from the Heaven where she is placed, has sustained the courage of these generous devoted men, who have signalized their constancy and faith in the midst of the most frightful sufferings. I will relate to you, therefore, in a few words, the history of these fervent neophytes, for I am persuaded that you will be touched by it.

The settlements of the Iroquois had been gradually depopulated by the desertion of many families, who took refuge in the Mission du Sault, for the purpose of embracing Christianity there. Etienne *te Ganonakoa* was of this number. He came to reside

there with his wife, a sister-in-law, and six children. He was then about thirty-five years of age; his natural disposition had nothing in it that was barbarous, and the stability of his marriage in a country where the most perfect license reigns, and where they easily change their wives, was one evidence of the innocency of the life which he had led. All the new comers urgently desired baptism, and it was granted them after the customary probation and instructions. We were immediately edified in the village by the union which evidently existed in this family, and the care with which they honored God. Etienne watched the education of his children with a zeal worthy of a missionary. Every day, both morning and evening, he sent them to prayers, and to the instructions which are provided for those of that age. Nor did he fail himself to set them an example, by the constancy of his attendance at all the exercises of the Mission, and by his frequent participation in the Sacraments.

It was by such a course of Christian conduct that he prepared himself to triumph over the enemies of religion, and to defend his faith in the midst of the most cruel torments. The Iroquois had used every means to induce those of their countrymen who were at the Sault to return to their native land. But their prayers and presents having been found useless, they resorted to menaces, and signified to them. that if they persisted in their refusal, they should no longer regard them as relatives or friends, but their hate become irreconcilable, and they would treat them as declared enemies. The war which was then existing between the French and Iroquois furnished them with a pretext for spending their rage on those of their countrymen who, after having thus deserted them, fell into their hands. It was at this time, in the month of August, 1690, that Etienne set out for the purpose of hunting, in the autumn, accompanied by his wife and another Indian of the Sault. In the following month of September, these three neophytes were surprised in the woods by a party of the enemy,

consisting of fourteen *Goïogoens*, who seized them, bound them, and carried them away prisoners into their country.

As soon as Etienne saw himself at the mercy of the *Goïogoens*, he did not for a moment doubt but that he would shortly be delivered up to a most cruel death. He expressed himself thus to his wife, and recommended to her, above all things, to remain steadfast to her faith, and in case she should ever be permitted to return to the Sault, to bring up her children in the fear of God. During the whole journey he did not cease exhorting her to constancy, and endeavoring to fortify her against the dangers to which she was about to be exposed among those of her own nation.

The three captives were conducted, not to *Goïogoen*, where it was most natural that they should carry them, but to *Onnoncagué*. God determined, it seemed, that the steadfastness and constancy of Etienne should shine forth in a place, which was at that time celebrated for the crowds of savages who were assembled about it, and who, while there, plunged themselves in the most infamous debaucheries. Although it is their custom to await the arrival of their captives at the entrance of the village, yet the joy they felt at having some of the inhabitants of the Sault in their power, induced them to go forth a great distance from their setttlement to meet their prey. They had arrayed themselves in their finest dresses as for a day of triumph—they were armed with knives and hatchets and clubs, and anything on which they could lay their hands, while fury was painted on their countenances. As soon as they joined the captives, one of the Indians came up to Etienne. "My brother," said he, "your end has come. It is not we who put you to death, but you sealed your own fate when you left us to live among the Christian dogs." "It is true," answered Etienne, "that I am a Christian, but it is no less true that I glory in being one. Inflict on me what you please, for I fear neither your outrages nor torments. I willingly give up my life for that God who has shed all his blood for me."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when they furiously threw themselves upon him, and cut him cruelly on his arms, his thighs, and over his whole body, which in an instant they covered with blood. They cut off several of his fingers, and tore out his nails. Then, one of the troop cried out to him, "pray to God." "Yes, I will pray to him," said Etienne; and raising his bound hands, he made as far as he was able the sign of the cross, at the same time pronouncing with a loud voice, in their language, these words, "In the name of the Father," &c. Immediately they cut off half his fingers which remained, and cried to him a second time, "pray to God now." Etienne made anew the sign of the cross, and the instant that he did so, they cut off all his fingers down to the palm of his hand. Then a third time they invited him to pray to God, insulting him, and pouring out against him all the injuries which their rage could dictate. As this generous neophyte commenced the attempt to make the sign of the cross with the palm of his hand, they cut it off entirely. Not content with these first sallies of fury, they gashed his flesh on all the places which he had marked with the sign of the cross, that is to say, on his forehead, on his stomach, and from one shoulder to the other, as if to efface those august marks of religion, which he had impressed there.

After this bloody prelude, they conducted the prisoners to the village. They at first bound Etienne before a large fire which they had kindled there, and in which they had heated some stones red-hot. These stones they placed between his thighs, and pressed them violently against each other. They then ordered him to chant after the Iroquois manner, and when he refused to do so, and, on the contrary, repeated in a loud voice the prayers he was accustomed to recite every day, one of the furious savages about him seized a burning brand, and struck him forcibly on the mouth; then, without giving him time to breathe, they bound him to the stake.

When the neophyte found himself in the midst of the red-hot irons and burning brands, far from showing any fear, he cast a tranquil look upon all the ferocious brutes who surrounded him, and spoke to them thus: "Satisfy yourselves, my brethren, with the barbarous pleasure you experience in burning me; do not spare me, for my sins merit much more of suffering than you can procure me; the more you torment me, the more you augment the recompense which is prepared for me in Heaven."

These words served only to inflame their fury. The savages all with a kind of emulation, seized the burning brands and red-hot irons, with which they slowly burned all the body of Etienne. The courageous neophyte suffered all these torments without allowing a single sigh to escape him. He seemed to be perfectly tranquil, his eyes being raised to heaven, whither his soul was drawn in continual prayer. At length, when he perceived his strength failing, he requested a cessation for a few moments, and then reviving all his fervor, he uttered his last prayer. He commended his soul to Jesus Christ, and prayed him to pardon his death to those who had treated him with so much inhumanity. At last, after new torments suffered with the same constancy, he gave up his soul to his Creator, triumphing, by his courage, over all the cruelty of the Iroquois.

They granted her life to his wife, as he had predicted to her. She remained sometime longer a prisoner in their country, but without either entreaties or threats being able to vanquish her faith. Having returned to *Agnié*, which was her native place, she remained there until her son came to seek her, and conducted her back to the Sault.

With regard to the Indian who was taken at the same time with Etienne, he escaped with the loss of some of his fingers which were cut off, and a deep cut which he received on his leg. He was carried afterwards to *Goiogoens*, where they granted him his life. They used every effort to induce him to marry there

and live in the customary debauchery of the nation; but he answered constantly, that his religion forbade him to indulge in these excesses. At last, having gone towards Montreal with a party of warriors, he secretly withdrew from his companions, and returned to the Mission du Sault, where he has lived since with much piety.

Two years afterwards, a female of the same Mission gave an example of constancy equal to that of Etienne, and finished her life, as he did, in the flames. She was named Françoise *Gonannhatenha*. She was from Onnontagué, and had been baptized by the Father Fremin. All the Mission was edified by her piety, her modesty, and the charity she exercised towards the poor. As she herself had abundance, she divided her goods among many families, who were thus sustained by her liberality. Having lost her first husband, she married a virtuous Christian who as well as herself was from *Onnontagué*, and who had lived a long time at *Chasteau-Guay*, which is three leagues distant from the Sault. He passed all his summers there in fishing, and happened to be actually there when news was received of an incursion of the enemy. Immediately Françoise placed herself in a canoe with two of her friends, to go in search of her husband, and deliver him from the peril in which he was involved. They arrived there in time, and the little party thought itself in security, when at the distance of only a quarter of a league from the Sault, they were unexpectedly surprised by armed enemies, who were composed of the *Onnontagués*, the *Tsonnontorians*, and the *Goiogoens*. They immediately cut off her husband's head, and the three women were carried away prisoners.

The cruelty which was exercised towards them the first night which they passed in the Iroquois camp, led them to realize that the most inhuman treatment awaited them. The savages diverted themselves with tearing out their nails, and burning their fingers in their pipes, which is, they say, a most dreadful torture.

Their runners carried to *Onnontagué* the news of the prize which they had taken, and the two friends of Françoise were immediately given to *Onneiout* and to *Tsonnontorian*, while Françoise herself was surrendered to her own sister, who was a person of great consideration in the village. But she, putting aside the tenderness which her nature and blood should have inspired her, abandoned her to the discretion of the old men and warriors, that is to say, she destined her to the fire.

No sooner had the prisoners arrived at *Onnontagué*, than they forced Françoise to ascend a scaffolding which was erected in the middle of the village. There, in the presence of her relatives and all her nation, she declared with a loud voice that she was a Christian of the Mission du Sault, and that she thought herself happy to die in her country and by the hands of her kinsmen, after the example of Jesus Christ, who had been placed on the cross by the members of His own nation, whom he had loaded with benefits.

One of the relatives of the neophyte who was present, had made a journey to the Sault five years before, for the purpose of inducing her to return with him. But all the artifices which he employed to persuade her to abandon the Mission were useless. She constantly answered him, that she prized her faith more than she did either country or life, and that she was not willing to risk so precious a treasure. The savage had for a long time nourished in his heart the indignation which he had conceived on account of this resistance, and now, being again still more irritated by listening to the speeches of Françoise, he sprang on the scaffolding, snatched from her a crucifix which hung from her neck, and with a knife which he held in his hand, made on her breast a double gash in the form of a cross. "Hold," said he, "see the cross which you esteem so much, and which prevented you leaving the Sault when I took the trouble to go and seek you." "I thank you, my brother," Françoise answered him, "It

was possible to lose the cross which you have taken from me, but you have given me one which I can lose only with my life."

She continued afterwards to address her countrymen on the mysteries of her faith, and she spoke with a force and unction which were far beyond her ability and talents. "In fine," said she, in concluding, "however frightful may be the torments to which you destine me, do not think that my lot will be to complain. Tears and groans rather become you. This fire which you kindle for my punishment, will only last a few hours, but for you a fire which will never be extinguished is prepared in hell. Nevertheless, you still have the opportunity to escape it. Follow my example, become Christians, live according to the rules of this so holy law, and you will avoid these eternal flames. Still however I declare to you, that I do not wish any evil to those whom I see preparing everything to take away my life. Not only do I pardon them for my death, but I again pray the Sovereign Arbiter of life and death to open their eyes to the truth, to touch their hearts, to give them grace to be converted and to die Christians like myself."

These words of Françoise, far from softening their savage hearts, only increased their fury. For three nights in succession they led her about through all the wigwams to make sport for the brutal populace. On the fourth they bound her to the stake to burn her. These furies applied to her, in all parts of her body, burning brands, and gun-barrels red-hot. This suffering lasted many hours, without this holy victim giving utterance to the least cry. She had her eyes ceaselessly elevated to Heaven, and one would have said that she was insensible to these excruciating pains. M. de Saint Michel, Seigneur of the place of that name, who was then a prisoner at *Onnontagué*, and who escaped as if by miracle from the hands of the Iroquois, only one hour before he was to have been burned, related to us all these circumstances of which he was a witness. Curiosity attracted around him all the inhab-

itants of Montreal, and the simple account of what he had seen, drew tears from every one. They were never tired of hearing him speak of a courage which seemed so wonderful.

When the Iroquois have amused themselves a sufficient length of time with burning their prisoners by a slow process, they cut them round the head, take off their scalp, cover the crown of the head with hot ashes, and take them down from the stake. After which they take a new pleasure in making them seen, pursuing them with terrific shouts, and beating them unmercifully with stones. They adopted this plan with Françoise. M. de Saint-Michel says that the spectacle made him shudder; but a moment afterwards he was excited even to tears, when he saw this virtuous neophyte throw herself on her knees, and raising her eyes to heaven offer to God in sacrifice the last breath of life which remained. She was immediately overwhelmed with a shower of stones which the Iroquois cast at her, and died, as she had lived, in the exercise of prayer, and in union with our Lord.

In the following year a third victim of the Mission du Sault was sacrificed to the fury of the Iroquois. Her sex, her extreme youth, and the excess of torment which they caused her to suffer, rendered her constancy most memorable. She was named Marguerite *Garongouas*, twenty-four years of age, a native of *Onnontagué*, and had received Baptism at the age of thirteen. She was married shortly afterwards, and God blessed her marriage in giving her four children, whom she brought up with great care in the precepts of religion. The youngest was yet at the breast, and she was carrying it in her arms at the time of her capture.

It was in the autumn of the year 1693, that having gone to visit her field at a quarter of a league from the fort, she fell into the hands of two savages of *Onnontagué*, who were from her own country, and it is even probable that they were her relatives. The joy which had been felt at *Onnontagué* at the capture of the first two Christians of the Sault, led these savages to believe that

this new capture would win for them the greatest applause. They therefore carried her with all speed to *Onnontagué*.

At the first news of her arrival, all the Indians poured out of the village, and went to await the prisoner on an eminence which it was necessary for her to pass. A new fury seemed to possess their minds. As soon as Marguerite came in sight, she was received with frightful cries, and when she reached the eminence, she saw herself surrounded by all the savages, to the number of more than four hundred. They first snatched her infant from her, then tore off her clothes, and at last cast themselves upon her pell-mell, and began cutting her with their knives, until her whole body seemed to be but one wound. One of our Frenchmen who was a witness of this terrible spectacle, attributed it to a kind of miracle, that she did not expire on the spot. Marguerite saw him, and calling him by name, exclaimed, "Alas! you see my destiny, that only a few moments more of life remain to me. God be thanked however, I do not at all shrink from death, however cruel may be the form in which it awaits me. My sins merit even greater pains. Pray the Lord that He will pardon them to me, and give me strength to suffer." She spoke this with a loud voice, and in their language. One cannot be sufficiently astonished, that in the sad state to which she was reduced, she had so much spirit remaining.

After a little while they conducted her to the cabin of a French woman, an inhabitant of Montreal, who was also a prisoner. She availed herself of the opportunity to encourage Marguerite, and to exhort her to suffer with constancy these short-lived pains, in view of the eternal recompense by which they would be followed. Marguerite thanked her for her charitable counsels, and repeated to her what she had already said, that she had no fears of death, but would meet it with good courage. She added also, that since her baptism she had prayed to God for grace to suffer for his love, and that seeing her body

so mangled, she could not doubt but that God had favorably heard her prayer. She was therefore contented to die, and wished no evil to her relatives or countrymen who were about to be her executioners, but on the contrary, she prayed God to pardon their crime, and give them grace to be converted to the faith. It is indeed a remarkable fact, that the three neophytes of whom I have spoken, all prayed in the hour of death for the salvation of those who were treating them so cruelly; and this is a most tangible proof of the spirit of charity which reigned at the Mission du Sault.

These two captives were conversing on eternal truths, and the happiness of the saints in Heaven, when a party of twenty savages came to seek Marguerite, to conduct her to the place where she was to be burned. They paid no regard to her youth, nor her sex, nor her country, nor the advantage she possessed in being the daughter of one of the most distinguished men of the village, one who held the rank of chief among them, and in whose name all the affairs of the nation were carried on. These things would certainly have saved the life of any one else but a Christian of the Mission du Sault.

Marguerite was then bound to the stake, where they burned her over her whole body with a cruelty which it is not easy to describe. She suffered this long and severe torture without showing the least sign of sorrow. They only heard her invoke the holy names of Jesus, of Mary, and of Joseph, and pray them to sustain her in this rude conflict, even until her sacrifice was completed. From time to time she asked for a little water, but after some reflection, she prayed them to refuse it to her, even when she might ask for it. "My Saviour," said she, "was thirsty while dying for me upon the Cross. Is it not right therefore, that I should suffer the same inconvenience?" The Iroquois tormented her from noon even to sunset. In the impatience they felt to see her draw her last breath, before the night

should oblige them to retire, they unbound her from the stake, took off her scalp, covered her head with the hot cinders, and ordered her to run. She on the contrary, threw herself on her knees, and raising her eyes and hands to Heaven, commended her soul to the Lord. The barbarians then struck her on the head many blows of a club without her discontinuing her prayer, until at last one of them, crying out, "Is it not possible for this Christian dog to die?" took a new knife and thrust it into the lower part of her stomach. The knife, although struck forward with great swiftness, snapped off to the entire astonishment of the savages, and the pieces fell at her feet. Another then took the stake itself to which she had been bound, and struck her violently on the head. As she still gave some signs of life, they heaped on the fire a pile of dry wood which happened to be in that place, and then cast her body on it, where it was shortly consumed. It is from thence that Marguerite went without doubt to receive in Heaven the recompense which was merited by a sainted life terminated by so precious a death.

It was natural that they should grant its life to her child. But an Iroquois to whom it had been given, wished to avenge himself on it for an affront which he thought he had received from the French. Three days after the death of Marguerite, they were surprised at hearing, at the beginning of the night, the cry of death. At this cry, all the savages sallied forth from their cabins to repair to the place from which it proceeded. The inhabitant of Montreal, of whom I have spoken, ran thither with the rest. There they found a fire burning, and the infant ready to be cast into it. The savages could not help being softened at this spectacle; but this was still more the case, when the infant, who was but a year old, raising its little hands to heaven, with a sweet smile, called three times on its mother, showing by its gesture that it wished to embrace her. The inhabitant of Montreal did not doubt but that its mother had appeared to it.

It is at least probable, that she had asked from God that her child should be reunited to her before long, that it might be preserved from the licentious training it would have, which would withdraw it as far as possible from Christianity. Although, as it happened, the infant was not abandoned to the flames, for one of the most considerable men of the village delivered it from them; yet it was only to devote it to a death scarcely less cruel. He took it by the feet, and raising it in the air, dashed its head against a stone.

I cannot forbear, my Reverend Father, speaking to you once more of a fourth neophyte of this Mission, who, although he escaped the fire which was prepared for him, nevertheless had the happiness of giving his life rather than be exposed to the danger of losing his faith. It was a young *Agnié*, named *Haonhouentsiontaouet*. He was captured by a party of the *Agniés*, who carried him away as a slave into their own country. As he had many relations, they granted him his life, and gave him to those who belonged to the same family. These were urgent in their solicitations that he should live according to the customs of the nation; that is to say, indulge in all the disorders of a licentious life. Etienne, far from listening to them, gave in reply the truths of salvation, which he explained with much force and unction, and ceaselessly exhorted them to go with him to the Mission du Sault, there to embrace Christianity. But he spoke to people born and educated in vice, the habit of which was too sweet to enable them to quit it. Thus, the example and the exhortations of the neophyte served no other purpose than to render them more guilty in the sight of God.

As it seemed that his residence at *Agnié* was of no advantage to his relatives, and that it might be even dangerous to his own salvation, he adopted the resolution to return to the Sault. He disclosed his intention to those around him, and they consented to it the more willingly, because they saw that they would thus

be delivered from an importunate censor, who was continually condemning the vices of the nation. He therefore a second time quitted his country and his family, for the sake of preserving that faith which was more dear to him than everything else.

Scarcely, however, had he set out on his journey, when the report of his departure spread through the wigwams. It was particularly mentioned in one, in which some intoxicated young men were at that time actually engaged in a debauch. They were enraged against Etienne, and after pouring out their abuse against him, concluded that it would not do to suffer him thus to prefer the Christian settlement to his own country, that this was an affront which reflected on the whole nation, and that they were bound to constrain the Christian dog to return to the village, or cut off his head, for the purpose of intimidating those who might be tempted to follow his example.

Three of them, therefore, immediately armed themselves with hatchets, and ran after Etienne. They shortly came up with him, and holding a hatchet raised over his head, said rou[illegible]ly, "Retrace your steps and follow us. It will be your d[illegible] to resist, for we have orders from the Sachems to cut off your head." Etienne answered them with his usual sweetness, that they were masters of his life, but that he preferred losing that to risking his faith and salvation in their village; that he was, therefore, going to the Mission du Sault, where he was resolved to live and die.

As he saw that after this particular declaration of his sentiments, these brutes would undoubtedly destroy him, he requested them to give him a few moments in which to pray to God. They had this condescension, intoxicated as they were, and Etienne threw himself on his knees, and tranquilly offered up his prayer, in which he thanked God for the grace which had been given him to die a Christian. He prayed, too, for his heathen relatives, and in particular for his murderers, who, at that very moment raised their hatchets and split open his head.

We were informed of the particulars of this death, so noble and Christian, by some *Agniés*, who came shortly after to fix their residence at the Mission du Sault.

I will finish this letter by the history of another Christian of this Mission, whose life has been a model of patience and piety. It was the earliest companion of Catherine *Tegahkouita*, and the most faithful imitator of her virtues. Jeanne *Gouastahra*, for such was her name, was of the nation of the *Onneiout*. She was married to a young *Agnié* at the Mission of Notre-Dame de Lorette, and her natural sweetness of character and rare virtue ought to have attracted to her all the tenderness of her husband. But the young man abandoned himself to the customary vices of his nation, that is to say, to intemperance and licentiousness, and his dissoluteness was to the neophyte a constant source of bad treatment. He sometime afterwards left the village of Lorette, and became a wanderer and a vagabond. His virtuous wife, however, was not willing to leave him. She followed him wherever he went, in the hope of at last inducing him to return to himself and thus gaining him to Jesus Christ; she endured his debaucheries and brutalities with unalterable patience; she even practised frequent austerities in secret, to obtain his conversion from God. The unhappy man took it into his head to come to the Sault, where he had relatives, and she accompanied him thither, and exhibited towards him those attentions and acts of kindness which should have been able to soften the hardest heart. At last, after many changes, having plunged deeply into licentiousness and dissoluteness, he entirely renounced his faith, and returned to the *Agniés*. This was the only place to which the neophyte refused to follow him. She had, however, the prudence to go and live at Lorette, with the relatives of her unworthy husband, hoping that this last proof of complaisance would induce him to abandon his debaucheries. But she had not passed a year there, when she learned that this apostate had been killed by

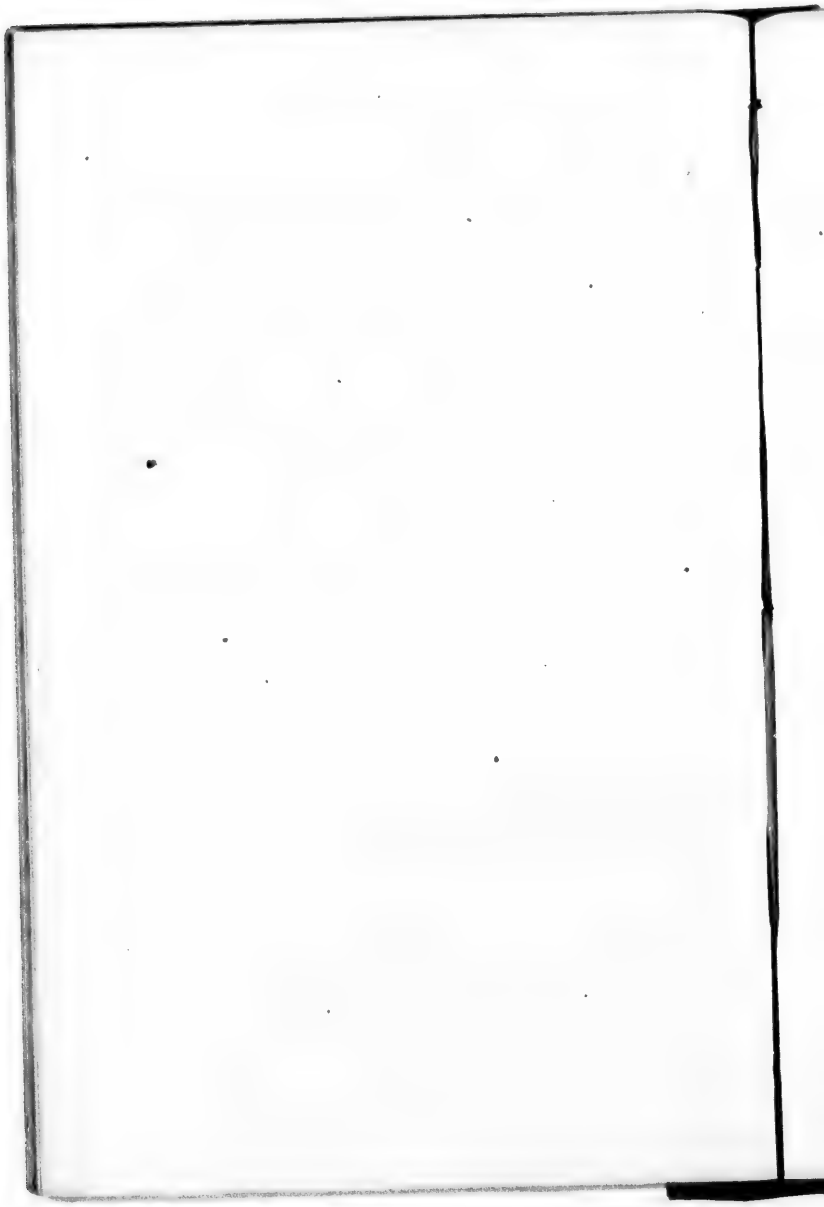
some savages, whose wigwam he had attacked when he had gone out after a debauch which had been extended to the last excess.

A death so bad touched her deeply. Although she was still in the flower of her age, she forever renounced all thoughts of the marriage state, and determined to pass the rest of her days near the tomb of Catherine. There she lived as a Christian widow, striving to sanctify herself by the practice of all virtues, and by continual austerities. And there she shortly afterwards died, in the odor of sanctity. One thing only gave her pain in her last illness. She was leaving behind her two children, still in their tender age, the one not having yet reached its sixth year, nor the other its fourth, and she feared lest, in process of time, they should be corrupted, and follow in the steps of their unhappy father. She had, therefore, recourse to our Lord with that fervor and confidence which animated all her prayers, and she asked of him the favor, that the children should not be separated from their mother. Her prayer was favorably heard, and although the two children were then in perfect health, the one became ill immediately, and died before the mother, while the other followed eight days after her own departure.

I should continue indefinitely, my Reverend Father, if I were to speak again of many other neophytes, whose virtue and faith were equally tried. What, however, I have already written will suffice to give some idea of the fervor which reigns in the Mission of St. Francis Xavier du Sault. His Grace the Bishop of Quebec, who visited our neophytes, has given his public testimony to their virtue. It is thus that this high Prelate speaks in a relation which he gave of the state of New France, and which was published in 1688:—"The ordinary life of all these Christians has "nothing about it which is common, and one might take it for a "veritable monastery. As they have abandoned all the advan- "tages of their own country, for the sole reason that they might "secure their salvation near the French, we can there see every-

"thing arranged for the practice of the most perfect freedom from "worldly passions, and they preserve among themselves so admi- "rable a method to promote their holiness, that it would be dif- "ficult to add anything else."

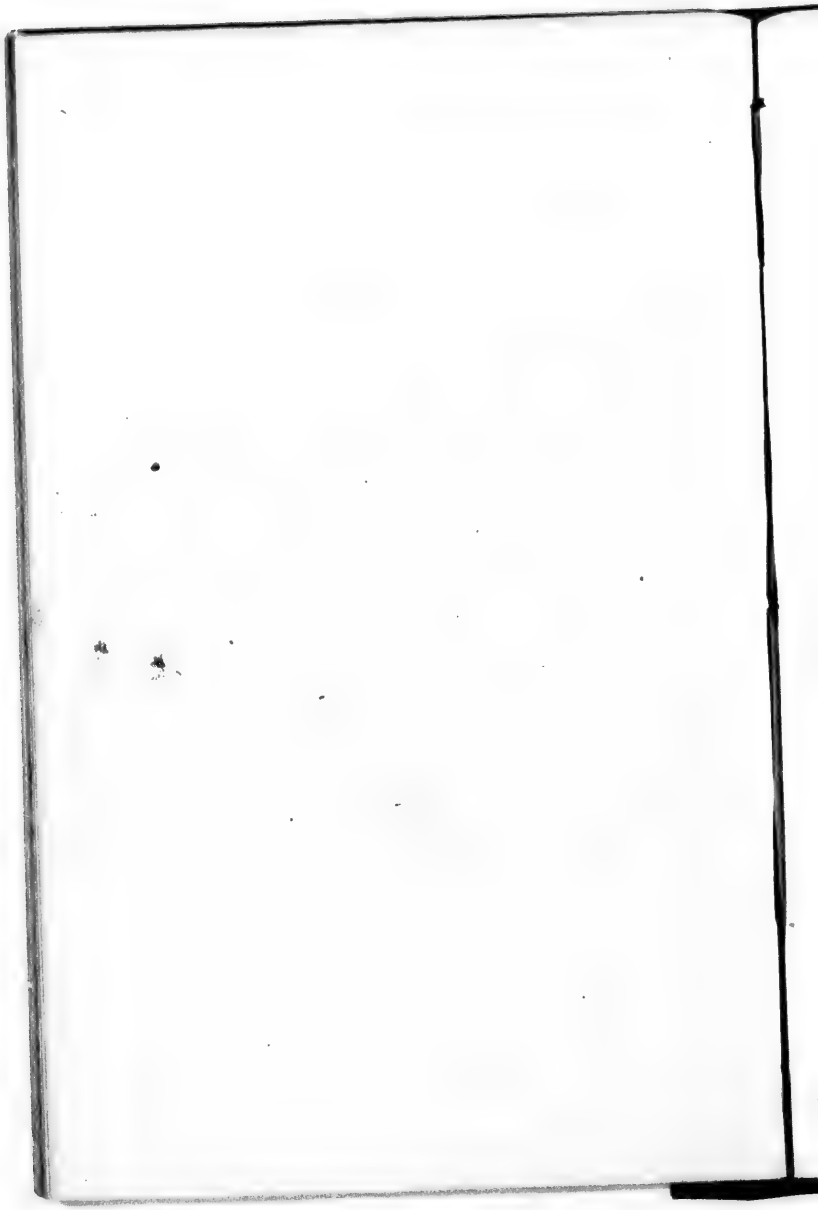
I hope, my Reverend Father, that your zeal will often lead you to pray to the God of mercy for these new converts, to the end that He would preserve them in that state of fervor in which He has placed them by His grace. With every sentiment of respect,



MONTCALM'S

EXPEDITION TO DESTROY FORT GEORGE.

1757.



LETTER VI.

FROM FATHER ROUBAUD, MISSIONARY AMONG THE ABNAKIS.

At St. Francis, the 21st of October, 1757.

On the twelfth of July I left St. Francis, the principal village of the Abnakis mission, to return to Montreal. The object of my voyage was merely to conduct to M. the Marquis de Vaudreuil, a deputation of twenty Abnakis destined to accompany Father Virot, who has gone to attempt the foundation of a new mission among the Loups at *Oye*, or the beautiful river. The part which I was able to act in this glorious enterprise, the events which took place, and the difficulties necessary to be surmounted, would furnish in succession interesting materials for new letters. But it is right to expect, that the blessings poured out should have crowned the efforts we have made to bear the light of our faith to the people who seem so well disposed to receive it.

Arrived at Montreal, distant one and a half day's journey from my mission, I thought myself at the end of my travels; but Providence had ordered otherwise. They were preparing an expedition against the enemy, and relying on the disposition of the Indian nation, they anticipated from it great success. It was necessary that the Abnakis should be of the party, and as all the Christian Indians were accompanied by their missionaries, who were eager to render them the appropriate assistance of their ministry, the Abnakis might be sure that I would not abandon them in circumstances so critical. I accordingly at once prepared to depart. My equipments were presently ready—one

shrine, and the holy oil for Extreme Unction, these were all—trusting for everything else to that Providence which had never forsaken me. I embarked two days afterwards on the great river St. Lawrence, in company with two priests of St. Sulpice. The one was M. Picquet, Missionary to the Iroquois at Galette, and the other, M. Mathavet, Missionary to the Nipistingues at the Lake of the Two Mountains. My Abnakis were encamped at Saint-Jean, one of the forts of the Colony, distant one day's journey from Montreal. My coming surprised them; they had not anticipated it. Scarcely had they perceived me, when they made the forests and the neighboring mountains echo back the news of my arrival. Even the children shared in these feelings, (for among the Indians, each one is a warrior as soon as he can carry a gun,) and gave me proofs of their satisfaction. *Nemittangoustena, Nemittangoustena*, they cried in their language; *Ouriourie eri namihoureg*. That is to say, "Our Father, our father, how much are we obliged for this, that you thus procure us the pleasure of seeing you." Thanking them in a few words for the good will which they had testified towards me, I did not delay to discharge in their presence the appropriate duties of my ministry. Scarcely had I pitched my tent when I hastened to rejoin them. Conducting them to the foot of a large Cross erected on the bank of the river, with a loud voice I offered up for them the Evening Prayer. I concluded it by a short exhortation, in which I endeavored to portray to them the obligations of a warrior whom religion influences in his conflicts, and then took leave of them, after having announced the celebration of the Mass on the morrow. I had supposed that would be the time of our departure, but bad weather disappointed our hopes, and we were obliged still to remain encamped on that day, which was occupied in making the proper arrangements for our march.

During the evening the kindness of an officer procured for us a sight of one of those spectacles connected with Indian warfare

which most persons admire, as being able to excite even in the most faint-hearted, that martial ardor which transforms them into true warriors. For myself, however, I could never look upon it but as a comic farce, likely to excite violent laughter in one who was not on his guard. I refer to one of their war-feasts. Imagine to yourself an immense assembly of savages, adorned with all the ornaments most likely to disfigure a face to European eyes. The vermilion, the white, the green, the yellow, the black made with soot or the scrapings of the pots, all these different colors unite in a single savage visage, and are methodically applied by the aid of a little tallow, which serves for pomatum. Such is the paint which, on these occasions of solemnity, is called into requisition to embellish, not only the face, but also the head. This is entirely shaven, except one little tuft of hair, reserved on the crown to attach to it plumes of birds, or small pieces of porcelain, or some other similar gewgaw. To each part of the head there is its peculiar ornament. The nose has its pendant; while the ears are equally well furnished, having been split in infancy, and then stretched out by weights with which they were loaded, so that at last they rest and flap on the shoulders. The remainder of their equipment corresponds with this fantastical decoration. A shirt bedaubed with vermilion, collars of porcelain, bracelets of silver, a large knife suspended on the breast, a belt of various colors, but always ridiculously assorted, moccasons of rough skin—such are the accoutrements of an Indian! The chiefs and captains are not distinguished, except the latter by a gorget or neck-piece, and the former by a medallion, which has on one side the portrait of the king, and on the reverse Mars and Bellona giving each other the hand, with the motto, *Virtus et honos.*

Imagine to yourself then, an assembly of people thus adorned, and arranged in lines. In the midst are placed large kettles filled with victuals, cooked and cut into pieces, to be more easily

carried about and distributed to the spectators. After a respectful silence which announces the majesty of the assembly, some captains deputed by the different nations which assist at the fête commence a chant, which they take up successively. You can imagine without any difficulty what this savage music must be, in comparison with the delicacy and taste of European. It is composed of sounds formed, I should say, almost by chance, and which sometimes do not badly resemble the cries and howlings of wolves. This is but the overture of the meeting—it is only the announcement and the prelude, to summon the Indians who are dispersed about, to come to the general rendezvous. The assembly being at length formed, the orator of the nation commences his speech and solemnly harangues the guests. This is the most reasonable part of the ceremony. A panegyric of the king—the praise of the French nation—the reasons which prove the justness of the war—all those motives of glory and religion which are proper to induce the young to march with joy to the combat—these form the foundation of such discourses, which most commonly do not betray the influence of savage barbarity. I have more than once heard that which the brightest intellects of France would not have disavowed. An eloquence derived from nature has no reason to regret the absence of all assistance from art.

The speech being finished, they proceed to nominate the leaders who shall command the party. As soon as each one is named, he rises in his place and comes forward to seize the head of one of the animals which constitute the staple of the feast. He lifts it up high to be seen by the whole multitude, crying out at the same time, "Behold the head of an enemy!" Then cries of joy and acclamations burst from every side, announcing the satisfaction of the assembly. The leader then, the head of the animal still in his hand, passes through all the ranks, chanting his war song, in which he exhausts himself in the most exagge-

rated boastings, in insulting defiance of the enemy, and in strange praises which he lavishes on himself. To hear them set forth their own merits, in these moments of warlike enthusiasm, you would suppose that they are all heroes, able to surpass everything—to crush everything—to vanquish everything. As they pass in review before the savages, these respond to their songs by cries, dull, broken, drawn apparently from the bottom of the stomach, and accompanied by movements of the body so ludicrous, that it is necessary to be accustomed to these things, to see them without losing all self-restraint.

In the course of the song he is careful to insert from time to time some grotesque pleasantry. Then he stops, as if to felicitate himself, or rather to receive the plaudits of the savages, which in a thousand confused cries are echoed back to his ears. He prolongs his warlike promenade, as long as the sport pleases him; when it ceases to do so, he ends it by casting from him with disdain the head which he had held in his hands, to show by this gesture of contempt, that it is a viand of an entirely different kind from that which is necessary to satisfy his military apetite. Then he goes to resume his place, where he is no sooner seated, than it sometimes happens that some one dresses for him the head in a pot of hot cinders; but this is a sign of friendship and a mark of tenderness which he would not suffer except on the part of a friend well declared and well known; a like familiarity in an ordinary man would be deemed an insult. To this first warrior others succeed who protract the meeting, especially when the object is to form large parties, because it is in ceremonies of this kind that they make their enrolments. At last the festival is ended by the distribution and consumption of the viands.

Such was the war-feast given by the Indians, and the ceremonial they observed. The Algonkins, Abnakis, Nipistingues, and Amenecis were at this fête. Nevertheless more serious cares demanded our presence elsewhere, and as it was getting late we

rose, and each missionary followed by his neophytes departed to finish the day with the usual prayers. A part of the night was spent in making the last preparations for our departure, which was fixed for the next day. The weather on this occasion proved favorable. We embarked, after having placed our voyage under the special protection of the Lord, by the celebration of a Mass, which was solemnly chanted with more method and devotion than one could readily imagine, for the Indians always excelled in this rite of our faith. The weariness of the march was relieved by the advantage which I had each day of thus celebrating the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, sometimes on the islands which were scattered about, sometimes on the banks of the rivers, but always in some place sufficiently retired to favor the devotion of our little army. It was indeed no light consolation for the ministers of the Lord, to hear His praise chanted in each of the different languages of which there were tribes assembled there. Every day each nation chose for itself a convenient place where it separately encamped. They practised too the exercises of religion as regularly as they would have done at home in their villages, so that the satisfaction of the Missionaries would have been complete, if all the days of this campaign had been passed as innocently as were those of our march.

We traversed the length of Lake Champlain, where the dexterity of the Indians in fishing furnished us with an amusing spectacle. Standing up in the bow of the canoe, with spear in hand, they darted it with wonderful address, and struck the large sturgeons, without their little skiffs, which the least irregular motion would have overturned, appearing to lean in the slightest degree either to the right or to the left. Yet useful as this fishing was, it was not even necessary that we should suspend our march to favor it. The fisherman alone laid aside his paddle, but in return he was charged to provide for the subsistence of all the others, an office in whose duties he fully succeeded.

At length, after being six days on our route, we reached Fort Vaudreuil,* otherwise called Carellon, which had been assigned as the general rendezvous of our troops. Scarcely had we begun to distinguish the summit of the fortifications, when our Indians arranged themselves in order of battle, each tribe under its own ensign. Two hundred canoes thus formed in beautiful order, furnished a spectacle which caused even the French officers to hasten to the banks, judging it not unworthy of their curiosity.

As soon as I had placed my foot on land, I hastened to pay my respects to M. the Marquis de Montcalm, whom I had formerly the pleasure to know in Paris. The sentiments of respect with which he honored our Order were also known to me, and on this occasion he received me with that affability which announced the goodness and generosity of his heart. The Abnakis, more to satisfy their own inclinations and their sense of duty, than to conform to mere ceremonials, did not delay to present themselves at the quarters of the General. Their orator complimented him briefly as they had directed him. "My father," said he, "do not fear. These are not mere compliments which I come to give you. I know your heart; it disdains such offerings; it is sufficient for you to have merited them. Well, in so doing you render me a service, for I was in no little embarrassment through the vain endeavor to reveal all I felt. I content myself then with assuring you, that these your children whom you behold, are all fully prepared to partake your perils, being well assured that they shall not delay also to share in the glory which shall follow." The turn of this compliment, it would seem, could hardly have come from a savage; but no one could have the least doubt on this point, if he knew the character of mind of him who pronounced it.

At the quarters of M. de Montcalm, I also heard of the admirable defence which had been made a few days before by a

[* Ticonderoga.]

Canadian officer, named M. de Saintout. He had been sent on a scouting expedition on Lake St. Sacrament, his party consisting of eleven individuals, including himself, in a single frail bark canoe. In doubling a point of land, he was surprised by two English boats, which were concealed in ambush, and commenced a brisk attack upon him. The parties were so unequally matched, that one single well-aimed volley would have decided the victory, and at the same time the lives of the French. M. de Saintout, who was a prudent man, gained in haste an island which was formed in the lake by a perpendicular cliff of rocks. Thither the enemy eagerly pursued him, but he presently damped their ardor by a discharge which he made on them with as much judgment as good fortune. The enemy, though disconcerted for some moments, shortly returned to the charge, but they were again so warmly received, that they hastened to debark on the opposite shore, which was within gun-shot. The combat then recommenced with more obstinacy than before, but success was ever the same, on our side. M. de Saintout perceiving that the enemy was in no humour to attempt an attack upon him at his post, and that he could not go to them without the risk of having his canoe sunk, determined on a retreat. He conducted it with coolness, as he had before defended himself with courage. He embarked in the presence of the English, who did not dare to pursue him, but contented themselves with keeping up an incessant fire. Three of our party were wounded in this rencontre, but only slightly, of whom M. de Saintout was one, and M. de Grosbois, a cadet of the colonial troops, was killed at his post. The enemy by their own acknowledgment had sent out thirty-seven from their fort, while only seventeen returned thither. Blows like this excite astonishment in Europe, but here the valor of the Canadians has so often multiplied them, that we are rather surprised not to see them repeated more than once in the course

of a single campaign. This letter in its progress will furnish a proof in support of this assertion.

After having paid my respects to M. de Montcalm, I returned to the quarters of the Abnakis. My object was, to direct the orator immediately to assemble his countrymen, and to inform them, that during the few days which would intervene before their departure to attack the English fort, I would attend to their religious duties, and that they should prepare themselves for this dangerous expedition by all those steps proper to assure themselves success with God. I at the same time let them know that my tent would be open at all times and for every one, and that I should always be ready, even at the peril of my life, to furnish them those succors which my ministry required. My offers were accepted. One party gave me the satisfaction of seeing them undergo the rite of penance. I thus disposed some of them to the reception of the August sacrament of our altars. It was on the following Sunday, the twenty-fourth of July, that they enjoyed this happiness. I neglected nothing which could invest this step with the greatest possible pomp. I solemnly chanted the Mass, during which I made them the first discourse in the Abnakis language, which I had formally composed. Its subject was, the obligation they were under to do honor to their religion by their conduct, in the presence of so many idolatrous nations, who either did not understand it, or else blasphemed it, and who had their eyes fixed on them I endeavored to present in glowing colors the motives best adapted to make an impression, nor did I forget to recal to their minds those perils inseparable from war, which their courage and valor induced them to multiply, rather than avoid. If the attention of an audience and their modest deportment could decide the question as to the effect of a discourse, I should have had every reason to congratulate myself on my feeble efforts. These exercises engaged us through most of the morning; but the Indian does not count the moments

which he gives to religion; he behaves himself with propriety and earnestness while in our churches. But he too often finds cause of scandal in the liberties which the French permit themselves to take while there, and the weariness which they bear impressed upon their countenances. Such is the happy disposition which the Indians show one day to become perfect Christians.

These were the occupations to which I gave myself up with the greatest satisfaction during the time of our sojourn in the neighborhood of Fort Vaudreuil. It did not last long, for at the expiration of the third day, we received orders for our departure to rejoin the French army which was encamped on the high grounds near the Portage. This is the place where a great fall of water obliged us to transport by land to Lake St. Sacrament the stores necessary for the siege. Arrangements were accordingly made to depart, when they were arrested by a spectacle which attracted the attention of every one.

They saw at a distance in a branch of the river, a little fleet of Indian canoes, which by their arrangement and ornaments announced a victory. It was M. Marin, a Canadian officer of great merit, who was returning triumphant and covered with glory from an expedition with which he had been charged. At the head of a force of about two hundred Indians, he had been detached to go in the direction of Fort Lidis,* but had the courage with his little flying camp to attack the advanced entrenchments, and the good fortune to carry the principal quarter. The Indians had only time to bring off thirty-five scalps of the two hundred men they killed, but without their victory being stained by a drop of their own blood, or the loss of a single man. The enemy, to the number of three thousand men, sought in vain to have their revenge, by pursuing them in their retreat, but it was made with-

[* Generally written *Lydius*, otherwise called Fort Edward, about fifteen miles from Fort George.]

out any loss.* While they were busy in counting the number of their barbarous trophies, that is, the English scalps with which the canoes were adorned, we perceived on the other side of the river a French bark, which was bringing us five English bound and conducted by the *Outaouacs*, whose prisoners they were.

A sight of these unhappy captives spread joy and satisfaction through the hearts of those who were present, but it was, for the most part, a ferocious and barbarous joy, which showed itself by fearful cries, and by steps which were sad for humanity. A thousand Indians drawn from the thirty-six nations who were united under the French standard, were present, and lined the bank. In an instant, without any apparent concert between them, we saw them rush with the greatest precipitation into the neighboring woods. I did not know what could be the object of a retreat so hasty and unexpected, but it was almost immediately

[* In the New York Secretary of State office in Albany, are the documents relating to our Colonial history, which were brought out during the past year by the historical agent, J. R. Broadhead, Esq. Among the Paris documents are the official despatches relating to this expedition. The affair of M. Marin is thus given in a letter of M. Doreil to the Minister of War, dated July 31st, 1757.

"A detachment of 150 men, the greater part Indians, whom M. de Montcalm had sent out on a scouting expedition, between Forts George and Lydius, under the command of M. Marin, lieutenant in the Colonial troops, have struck a blow remarkable for its boldness. They arrived on the morning of the 23rd, near Fort Lydius. At first they encountered a patrol of 10 men, who were all killed. They then came up with the guard of 50 men, who met with the same fate. A corps of the enemy of more than 4000 men were arrayed in order of battle, marched forth from their entrenchments, and advanced to the borders of the woods where M. Marin was in ambush. He kept up a fire for more than an hour, killed many of the enemy, and at last retired in such good order, that although he was pursued for two leagues, he lost but a single man, a Canadian. Our detachment returned on the 26th, with 32 scalps and one prisoner." *Vol.* xlvi. *p.* 202.]

shown, for a moment afterwards I saw them return with every mark of fury, armed with clubs which they had prepared to give these unfortunate English a most cruel reception. I could not restrain my feelings at the sight of these cruel preparations. Tears streamed from my eyes, but my grief was nevertheless not inactive. I advanced, without hesitation, to encounter these savage brutes, in the hope of softening them; but alas! what chance had my feeble voice of being even heard amidst the tumult, and the sounds which did reach them were rendered unintelligible by the difference of language, and much more by the ferocity of their hearts. However, I did not spare the most bitter reproaches towards certain of the Abnakis whom I met in my way, and the earnest air which animated my words, inclined them to sentiments of humanity. Confused and ashamed, they separated themselves from the murderous troop, casting away the cruel instruments they had prepared to use. But what effect could this produce, when it was the withdrawal of a few arms from nearly two thousand which were determined to strike without pity? Seeing how useless were the attempts I made, I determined to withdraw, that I might not be a witness of the bloody tragedy which was about to take place. I had taken some steps when a feeling of compassion recalled me to the bank, from whence I could see those unhappy victims whom they were preparing for the sacrifice. Their condition renewed all my sensibility. The terror with which they had been seized, had scarcely left them strength to hold themselves up; their countenances cast down and marked by consternation, displayed the true image of death. It was indeed a question of life or death, for they were about to expire under a shower of blows, unless their preservation came from the heart of barbarism itself, and their sentence should be revoked by the same persons, who seemed to have been the first to pronounce it.

The French officer who commanded in the boat had seen the

movements which were taking place on the bank; touched by the commiseration so natural in an honorable man at the sight of unhappiness, he endeavored to awaken the same feeling in the hearts of the Outaouacs, who were masters of the prisoners. So adroitly did he manage the matter, that he at last produced some sensibility in their minds, and interested them in favor of those miserable beings. They indeed entered into his scheme with a zeal which must have insured its success. No sooner was the boat near enough to the bank for the voice to be heard, than one of the Outaouacs speaking boldly, cried in a menacing tone, "These prisoners are mine; I claim that you shall respect me by respecting what belongs to me. Let there be an end to all ill treatment in which what is odious must rebound upon my head." A hundred French officers might have spoken in these terms, but their speech could only have ended in drawing down insult on themselves, and redoubled blows on the captives; but an Indian fears one who is like him, and fears only him. Their slightest disputes end in death, and therefore they occur but seldom. The wishes of the Outaouac were respected as soon as heard. The prisoners were landed without tumult and conducted to the fort, without even their being accompanied by the least shouting. They were then separated and underwent an examination, in which it was not necessary to resort to any artifices, to draw from them the disclosures which were desired. The terror from which they had not yet entirely recovered unloosed the tongue, and gave them a volubility which they apparently would not have had without it. One of them I visited in an apartment of the fort which was occupied by a friend. I gave him by signs those assurances which were most proper to tranquillize his fears, and caused them to present him with some refreshments, which he seemed to receive with gratitude.

Having thus as far as possible satisfied my compassion for the necessities of this miserable man, I went to hasten the embark-

ment of my people, which took place at that very hour. The passage was not a long one, and two hours sufficed to accomplish it. The tent of the Chevalier de Levi was placed at the entrance of the camp. I took the liberty to present my respects to this nobleman, whose name announces his merits, but whose other claims to respect far outweigh those derived from his mere rank. The conversation turned on the action which had decided the fate of these five Englishmen, whose perilous adventure I have just been relating. I was entirely unacquainted with the circumstances, in which there is much that is surprising. They are as follows:—

M. de Corbiese, a French officer, serving in the Colonial troops, had been ordered on the preceding night to cross over Lake St. Sacrament. His force consisted of about fifty French, and little more than three hundred Indians. At the dawn of day he discovered a body of three hundred English, detached also in that direction, in fifteen boats. Boats of this kind, high on the sides, and strong from their thickness, when placed in competition with the frail canoes, more than compensate for the slight superiority of numbers which we had on our side. Nevertheless, our people did not hesitate a moment to engage. The enemy appeared at first to accept their challenge with a good grace, but their resolution did not last. The French and Indians, who could have no reasonable hope of victory except by boarding, which course was favored by their superiority in number, and who, on the other hand risked everything by engaging at a distance, endeavored at once to close with the enemy, notwithstanding the brisk fire they kept up. But the enemy no sooner saw them at hand, than terror caused them even to drop their arms. It ceased to be a conflict, and became only a flight. Of the alternatives they had, the least honorable, without any doubt, and what is more, the most dangerous, was to attempt to gain the shore; and yet this was the one which they selected. In an instant they were seen pulling in

the greatest haste for the bank, while some, to reach there sooner, threw themselves into the water for the purpose of swimming. They flattered themselves with the prospect of safety under cover of the woods, but it was a scheme badly conceived, and the folly of which they had ever afterwards to mourn. Whatever speed the redoubled efforts of the rowers could give to these boats, even if it equalled all of which the skill and art of the builder had rendered them capable, it could not in any way approach the swiftness of a bark canoe. The latter sails, or rather flies, over the water with the rapidity of an arrow. The English, therefore, were almost immediately overtaken. In the first heat of the conflict all were massacred without mercy, all were cut to pieces. Those who had already gained the woods, had no better fate. The woods are the natural home of the Indians, and they can run there with the swiftness of deer. There they came up with the enemy, and cut them down separately. At length the Outaouacs, seeing that they had no longer an enemy to combat with, but only those who suffered themselves to be slaughtered without resistance, thought of making some prisoners. The number amounted to one hundred and fifty-seven, while a hundred and thirty-one had been killed; twelve only were fortunate enough to escape both captivity and death. The boats, ammunition, provisions, all were taken and plundered.

After all this, Monsieur, you think, I doubt not, that a victory so indisputable must have cost us dear. The fight took place on the water, that is, in a place entirely open; the enemy was not taken unexpectedly; he had plenty of time to make his arrangements; he commenced the fight with a feeling of contempt, so to speak; from the height of his boats he discharged his musketry on the feeble bark canoes, which a little address, or what was better, a little coolness, would easily have sunk with all who defended them. All this is true, and yet a success so complete was

achieved at the cost of a single Indian wounded, whose wrist was injured by a shot.*

Such was the fate of the detachment of the unfortunate M. Copperel, who was the commander, and is said by general report to have perished in the water. The enemy referred to the disasters of that day, in terms which marked equally their grief and surprise. They candidly acknowledged the greatness of their loss. It would have been difficult indeed to disprove it in the slightest particular. The dead bodies of their officers and soldiers, some floating on the waters of Lake Saint Sacrament, and some already stretched on the shore, would have testified against their denial. As to their prisoners, the greater part were as yet groaning in captivity to the Chevalier de Levi. I saw them file off in bands, escorted by their conquerors, who delighted with the barbarity of their triumphs, did not even show any disposition to soften their defeat to the vanquished. In the space of one league, which it was necessary for me to pass to rejoin my Abnakis, I met very many little troops of these captives. More than one Indian stopped me on my way to show me his prize, and

[* M. Doreil's letter to the Minister substantially agrees with this—"An English detachment composed of 350 men under the command of a colonel, five captains, four lieutenants, and one ensign were sent out from Fort George in 22 barges, (these barges are large boats), the object of the enemy being to cut off our advanced corps and to make them prisoners. About 400 of our Indians, commanded by M. de Corbiere and some other colonial officers, who were in ambush among the islands of Lake St. Sacrament, entirely destroyed the party on the 26th. Only two boats were saved. The Indians have brought in 180 prisoners. The rest have been killed or drowned, and the greater part of the boats destroyed. For all this we have but one single Indian slightly wounded. The English surrendered themselves, so to speak, without resistance." *Brodhead's Colonial Documents*, vol. XLVI. p. 207-8.

Montcalm, in his official report, says—"I have here about 161 prisoners, of whom five are officers. The English have had about 160 men killed or drowned"—*Ibid.* p. 204.]

to enjoy my applause as he went along. The love of country did not permit me to be insensible to these successes which interested the nation. But misery has a claim not only in religion, but even in nature. These prisoners moreover presented themselves to me in so sad a condition, their eyes filled with tears, their faces covered with sweat and even with blood, and a cord around their necks, that at the sight, sentiments of compassion and humanity were excited in my breast. The ardent spirits of which their new masters had most freely partaken, had heated their blood, and irritated their natural ferocity, so that I feared every instant to see some prisoner, the victim of their cruelty and drunkenness, massacred before my eyes and falling dead at my feet. I therefore scarcely dared to raise my head, for fear of encountering the looks of some of these miserable beings, but I was shortly afterwards obliged to be witness to a spectacle of a different kind, more horrible than any that I had yet seen.

My tent had been placed in the middle of the encampment of the Outaouacs. The first object which presented itself to my eyes on arriving there was a large fire, while the wooden spits fixed in the earth gave signs of a feast. There was indeed one taking place. But, O Heaven! what a feast! The remains of the body of an Englishman was there, the skin stripped off, and more than one-half the flesh gone. A moment after I perceived these inhuman beings eat with famishing avidity of this human flesh; I saw them taking up this detestable broth in large spoons, and apparently without being able to satisfy themselves with it. They informed me that they had prepared themselves for this feast by drinking from skulls filled with human blood, while their smeared faces and stained lips gave evidence of the truth of the story. What rendered it more sad was, that they had placed very near them some ten Englishmen to be spectators of their infamous repast. The Outaouac closely resembles the Abnakis, and I thought that, by making some mild representation to these inhu-

man monsters, I might gain some hold upon them. But I was only flattering myself. A young man, with a resolute air, took up the conversation, and said to me in bad French—"You have French taste; I have Indian: this food is good for me." He accompanied his remarks by the offer which he made me of a piece of the broiled Englishman. I could make no reply to his argument, which was so worthy of a savage; as to his offers, one may easily imagine with what horror I rejected them.

Taught by the failure of this attempt that my efforts could not in any way avail the dead, I turned to the living, whose lot appeared to me a hundred-fold more to be deplored. As I approached the English, one of their number arrested my attention. By the military ornaments with which he was still decorated, I recognized an officer. My purpose was immediately formed to purchase him, and thus secure for him both his liberty and his life. With this view I approached an aged Outaouac, believing that the chill of age having moderated his ferocity, I should find him more favorable to my designs. I extended to him my hand, saluting him politely, in the hope of gaining him to me by kindness of manner. But it was not a man with whom I was dealing; it was something worse than a ferocious beast, who was not to be softened by these caresses. "No," said he to me, in a thundering and menacing tone, well calculated to fill me with fear, if at that moment I had been susceptible of any other sentiments than those which inspired compassion and horror—"No, I do not at all wish your favors; be gone." I did not think it by any means necessary to wait till he should repeat a compliment of this kind; I obeyed him.

I went to shut myself up in my tent, to surrender my mind to the reflections which religion and humanity were able to suggest under such circumstances. I had no idea of taking any measures to warn my Abnakis against an excess so outrageous. Although the example might be a dangerous rock for all these men, as far

as their temperance and morals were concerned, yet they were incapable of going to such extremities. We can even do them the justice to say, that in the times when they were plunged most deeply in the darkness of paganism, they had never merited the odious name of cannibals. Their humane and docile character in this respect had, since that time, rendered them honorable exceptions to the greatest part of the Indians on this continent. Reflections of this kind occupied me until the night was far advanced.

The next morning, on awakening, I supposed that no vestige of the repast of the previous evening would remain about my tent. I flattered myself that the fumes of their liquor being dissipated, and the excitement inseparable to action having passed off, their spirits would have become more settled, and their hearts more human. But I was acquainted with neither the genius nor the taste of the Outaouacs. It was through choice, through delicacy, through daintiness, that they nourished themselves with human flesh. Since the earliest dawn they had done nothing but recommence their execrable cookery, and now were waiting with anxiety for the desired moment when they should be able to glut their more than canine appetite, by devouring the sad relics of the body of their enemy.

I have already mentioned that there were three missionaries attached to the service of the Indians. During all the campaign our lodgings were together, our deliberations were unanimous, our movements uniform, and our wishes entirely agreed. This mutual understanding served not a little to sweeten the toils inseparable from a military march. After consultation we all agreed, that the respect due to the dignity of our holy mysteries would not permit us to celebrate the sacrifice of the Lamb without spot, in the very centre of barbarism. The more these people were given up to the most extravagant superstitions, would they be inclined to desecrate our most holy ceremonies, or even

to draw from them materials for the embellishment of their jugglerics. For this reason, we abandoned the place defiled by such abominations, to take refuge in the woods. I was not able to make this movement without separating myself a little from my Abnakis. It seemed as if I was authorized in doing so, and yet you will judge from what afterwards took place, that I had almost reason to regret my first place of encampment. I was no sooner established in my new abode, than I saw the deep desire to partake of the benefits of confession renewed in the hearts of my neophytes. The crowd increased so much, that I was scarcely able to answer the demands made upon me by their eagerness. These occupations, joined to the other duties of my ministry, so entirely filled up several days, that they passed by almost without my perceiving it. Happy should I have been if I had only been obliged to attend to such worthy functions; my life itself would not have been too much to pay for such an honor. But the consolations of the ministers of Jesus Christ are not lasting here below, because success does not always attend their labors undertaken for the glory of their master. The enemies who conspire to defeat them are too numerous, not to enjoy at last the sad triumph of success.

While many of my Abnakis in a Christian way were procuring reconciliation and grace from the Lord, others were rashly seeking to irritate his wrath and provoke his vengeance. Drinking is the favorite passion and the universal vice of all these Indian tribes, and unfortunately there are too many greedy hands who will pour out for them the "fire-water," in despite of laws both divine and human. There is no doubt but that the presence of the missionary, by the influence which his character gives him, can prevent many of these disorders. For the reasons which I have given above, I had removed myself a little from my people, so that I was separated from them by a small woods. This I could not think it advisable to pass through at night, to observe

whether good order reigned in our camp, as I should have exposed myself to some untoward adventure, not only on the part of the Iroquois attached to the side of the English, who at the very gate of the camp had a few days before taken the scalp from one of our grenadiers, but also on the part of our own idolaters, on whom experience had taught me, I could not depend. Some young Abnakis therefore, joined with some other Indians of the different tribes, profited by my absence and the darkness of the night, to go, while all were wrapped in sleep, to obtain secretly some drink in the tents of the French. Once having procured their precious treasure, they hastened to make use of it, and soon their heads were entirely turned. Drunkenness among the Indians is rarely quiet, but almost always blustering. These persons showed it at first by songs and dances, in a word by noise, until finally, they ended in blows. At the dawn of day their extravagances had reached their height, and this was the first intimation I had received, on rising, as to what was going on. I promptly ran to the spot where the tumult was taking place. Everything there was in alarm and agitation, the natural effects of drunkenness. But all was immediately restored to order by the docility of my people. I took them one after the other, familiarly by the hand, and conducted them without resistance to their tent, where I ordered them to repose.

This scandal seemed to have passed away, when a Moraigan, naturalized among the Abnakis and adopted by that nation, renewed the scene in a manner a little more serious. After having some high words with an Iroquois, his companion in the debauch, they at last came to blows. The former, who was much the most athletic, after having felled his antagonist, rained on him a shower of blows, and what is worse, tore his shoulder with his teeth. The conflict was at its height when I arrived. I was able, however, to obtain no other succor than that of my own arms to separate the combatants, the savages mutually fearing too

much ever to interfere, let the result be what it might, in these disputes among each other. But my strength was not at all equal to the greatness of the work I had undertaken, and the victor was too much excited to release his prey so soon. I was tempted to leave these furious beings to inflict, with their own hands, a proper punishment for their excesses, but feared lest the scene might have a bloody termination by the death of one of the champions, and therefore redoubled my efforts. By dint of shaking the Abnakis, he at last perceived that some one had hold of him, and therefore turned his head. It was not without deep shame that he recognized me, yet nevertheless he did not at once return to reason, for it took him some moments to recover himself; when he gave the Iroquois free space to escape, of which he availed himself with a good grace.

After having taken measures to prevent a renewal of the contest, I retired more fatigued than one would believe with the incursion I had been obliged to make; but it was necessary for me almost immediately to recommence. I was informed that a troop of my warriors, assembled on the bank around the boats which contained the magazines of powder, were amusing themselves with firing their guns, in despite of the guard, and in contempt even of the orders, or rather prayers of the officers; for the Indian is his own master and his own king, and carries everywhere with him his feeling of independence. I had not at this time to contend against drunkenness, but the point was to repress the youthful folly of some thoughtless people. The decision therefore was prompt. Imagine to yourself a crowd of school-boys dreading the eyes of their masters. Such in my presence were these redoubtable warriors; they disappeared at my approach, to the great astonishment of the French. With difficulty was I able to arrest one, from whom I demanded, in a tone of indignation, whether he was tired of living, or whether he had conspired for our destruction? He answered me, in the mildest possible tone,

"No, my father." "Why then," I added, "why do you expose yourself to the danger of being blown into the air, and to blow us up with you by the explosion of the powder?" "Reproach us with ignorance," replied he, "but not with intentional wrong. We did not know that it was so near." Without at all wishing to impeach his veracity, one cannot but suspect the truth of his excuse; but it was much that he was willing to descend to a justification, and much more that he was willing to put an end to this dangerous sport, which was done at once.

The inaction to which I saw our Christian Indians condemned, joined to their being mingled with so many idolatrous tribes, made me tremble, not for the steadfastness of their religious principles, but for their consistency of conduct. I earnestly longed for the day when the necessary preparations for the expedition being finally completed, we should be able to put ourselves in motion. When the mind is occupied, the heart is more safe. At last the desired moment arrived. The Chevalier de Lévi, at the head of three thousand men, had commenced his march by land, on Friday the twenty-ninth of July, to enable him to protect the descent of the main body of our force, which was to go by water. His march had none of those facilities which are furnished in Europe by the great roads made with royal magnificence for the accommodation of troops. Thick forests were to be pierced, craggy mountains scaled, and heavy marshes traversed. After a forced march of an entire day, it was accomplishing much if they found they had advanced three leagues, so that it took five days to get over a distance of twelve leagues. On account of these obstacles, which had been foreseen, this corps had preceded us several days in its departure. It was on Sunday that we embarked with the Indians alone, who formed at the time a body of twelve hundred men by themselves, the others having gone by land.

We had not advanced more than four or five leagues on the

lake, before we perceived evident proofs of our late victory. There were the abandoned English boats, which, after having floated a long time at the sport of the winds and waves, had at last been thrown upon the shore. But the most striking spectacle was a great number of the dead bodies of the English, extended on the banks, or scattered here and there through the woods Some were cut to pieces, and almost all mutilated in the most frightful manner. What a terrible scourge did war seem to me! It would have been a great consolation to me could I have procured, through my instrumentality, the burial of these sad relics of our enemies, but it was only by peculiar favor that we had been permitted to land in this bay. It was absolutely necessary too that we should continue our march without interruption, conformably to the orders which hurried us forward to report ourselves. We landed at night at the place which had been assigned for our camp. It was the side of a hill covered with brambles and thorns, and the haunt of a prodigious number of rattlesnakes.* Our Indians hunted them out, and caught many, which they brought to me.

This venomous reptile, for it deserves this name, if anything ever did, has a head the smallness of which does not accord with the large size of the body; its skin is in some places regularly marked with a dark spot, and then one of a pale yellow; the rest of it is entirely black. It is not armed with any sting, but its teeth are exceedingly sharp. Its eye is lively and brilliant; it carries under the tail many little scales, which it inflates prodigiously, and strikes violently one against the other, when it is irritated. The noise which is thus produced is the occasion of the name by which it is known. Its gall when smoked, is a specific for the tooth-ache. Its flesh, also smoked and reduced to powder, is said to be an excellent remedy for fever. Some salt, wet and

[* Serpens a sonnettes.]

applied to the place, is a certain cure for its bite, the venom of which is so prompt that it causes death in less than an hour.

The next day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, M. de Montcalm arrived with the remainder of the army. It became necessary for us to resume our route, notwithstanding the deluge of rain by which we were inundated. We marched almost all the night, until we distinguished the camp of M. de Levi, by three fires placed in the form of a triangle on the top of a mountain. We halted there, when a general council was held, after which the troops on land again put themselves in motion towards Fort George, now distant only four leagues. It was not till towards noon that we re-entered our canoes. We floated along slowly, for the purpose of giving time to the boats which carried the artillery to follow us. It was very necessary that they should hasten on. At evening we were more than a league ahead, nevertheless, as we had reached a bay, the point of land forming which we could not double, without entirely discovering ourselves to the enemy, we determined, while waiting for new orders, to pass the night there. It was marked by a little action, which was the prelude of the siege.

About eight o'clock, two boats sent out from the fort appeared on the lake. They sailed along with an assurance and a tranquillity which they were soon obliged hastily to abandon. One of my neighbors who was on the watch for the general safety, perceived them when very far off. The news was at once imparted to all the Indians, and the preparations to receive them were made with promptness and in admirable silence. I was instantly summoned to provide for my safety, by gaining the shore, and thence the interior of the woods. It was not at all in consequence of a courage, out of place in a man in my position, that I turned a deaf ear to the advice which they had the goodness to give me; but I did not believe the matter was serious, because I thought there were reasons for suspecting the truth of the news. Four

hundred boats or canoes, which for the space of two days had covered the waters of Lake Saint-Sacrament, formed too considerable a train to have been able to escape the attentive and observant eyes of an enemy. For this reason I had difficulty in persuading myself that two boats would have the temerity, I do not say to measure themselves with us, but even to present themselves before forces so superior. My reasoning was, that it would only be necessary to show ourselves, to put them to flight. One of my friends, who was a spectator of all that was going on, warned me again, in a tone too serious for me not to heed it, that I was out of place. He had reason to do so. One boat of a sufficient size contained all the missionaries, and over it was stretched a tent, which had been furnished to shield us from the injurious effect of the atmosphere, which in this climate is quite cold during the nights. This pavilion, thus arranged, formed a kind of dark object in the air, which they easily discovered by the light of the stars. Curious to investigate what it could be, it was directly towards that spot that the English steered. To choose that course, and to rush on death, was almost entirely the same thing. Slight chance of escape indeed would there have been, unless by good fortune for them, a little accident had drawn us out some moments too soon. One of the sheep we had with us happened to bleat, and at this cry, which disclosed the ambush, the enemy turned about and made towards the opposite bank, using their oars to the utmost to save themselves through means of the darkness and the woods. This manœuvre being immediately seen, what was to be done? Twelve hundred savages were at once in motion, and flew to the pursuit with cries equally frightful by their continuance as by their number. Nevertheless, both sides seemed at first to be backward, as not a single shot was discharged. The pursuers not having had time to form, feared to draw the fire upon themselves, and besides wished to take prisoners. The fugitives employed their arms much more

usefully in accelerating their flight. They had almost reached the opposite side, when the Indians, who perceived that their prey was escaping, fired, and the English, pressed almost too close by the foremost canoes, were obliged to return it. Then followed a fearful silence succeeding all this uproar. We were waiting for the news of success, when a swaggerer took it into his head to attempt to gain honor for himself by a fictitious account of the action, in which he probably had not even taken part. He began by assuring us that the battle had been fatal to the Abnakis. This was sufficient to put me in motion. Furnished with oil for Extreme Unction, I threw myself with haste into a canoe to go and meet the combatants, entreating my guides each moment to use diligence. But there was no necessity for it, at least so far as I was concerned. Encountering an Abnakis, who was better instructed, because he had been more brave, I learned that the action which had been reported as so murderous, had terminated in one Nipistingue being killed and one other wounded while boarding. I did not wait for the rest of his account, but hastened to rejoin my people, to yield my place to M. Mathavet, missionary of the Nipistingue tribe. I arrived by water at the same time that M. de Montcalm, who at the sound of the musketry had landed a little below, reached the spot by coming through the woods. He learned that I had just come from ascertaining the state of things, and therefore addressed himself to me for information. My Abnakis, whom I recalled, gave him a short account of the combat. The darkness of the night did not permit them to know the loss on the side of the enemy, but they had seized their boats and made three prisoners. The rest were wandering scattered through the woods. M. de Montcalm, charmed with this detail, retired to make arrangements, with his accustomed prudence, for the operations of the next day.

The morning had scarcely begun to dawn, when a party of the Nipistingue tribe, proceeded with the funeral rites of their

brother, killed during the action of the preceding night, and who had died in the errors of paganism. His obsequies were celebrated with all pomp and savage splendor. The dead body had been arrayed in all its ornaments, or rather overloaded with all the trinkets that the most unusual degree of pride would be able to employ under circumstances so sad in themselves. Collars of porcelain, silver bracelets, pendants for the ears and the nose, magnificent dresses, all had been lavished on him. They had even called in the aid of paint and vermilion, to cover up, under these brilliant colors, the pallid hue of death, and to give to his countenance an air of life which it did not in reality possess. They had not been forgetful of any of the decorations of an Indian warrior. A gorget, or neck-piece, bound with a red ribbon, hung negligently on his breast; his gun was resting on his arm, the tomahawk at his belt, the pipe in his mouth, the lance in his hand, and the kettle, filled with provisions, at his side. Clothed in this warlike and animated array, they had seated him on an eminence covered with grass, which served him for his bed of state.

The Indians ranged in a circle about the dead body, regarded it for some moments in a solemn silence, which did not badly convey the idea of grief. This was broken by the orator, who pronounced the funeral oration for the dead. Then succeeded the chants and dances, to the sound of a tabor which is hung round with little bells. In all this there was an indescribable air of sadness, which agreed well with the melancholy ceremonial. At length the funeral rites were ended by the interment of the dead, near whom they took good care to bury a sufficient supply of provisions, for fear, without doubt, that for want of nourishment he might die a second time. I do not at all give these things as the testimony of an eye-witness; the presence of a missionary would scarcely be in accordance with these kinds of spectacles, having their origin in superstition, and

adopted by a stupid credulity. I give the account which I received from some spectators.

The bay however in which we were moored, resounded on all sides with the noise of war. Everything there was in motion and action. Our artillery, which consisted of thirty-two pieces of cannon and five mortars, placed on some platforms, which were borne on boats fastened together, led the way. In passing the point of land which had concealed us from the view of the enemy, they took care to salute the fort by a general discharge. This at the time was nothing but mere ceremony, but it announced more serious matters. The rest of the little fleet followed, but slowly. Already a body of the Indians had formed their camp in the rear of Fort George, or on the road to Fort Lydia, to cut off all communication between the two English forts. The corps of the Chevalier de Levi, occupied the defiles of the mountains, which led to the place designated for our landing. Favored by these measures, which were planned with so much wisdom, our descent was made without opposition, a good half league below the fort. The enemy however, had too much at home to employ them, to allow of their leaving there to put obstacles in our way. They seemed to have been not in the least expecting a siege, though I cannot imagine from what source their confidence arose. The environs of their forts were occupied by a multitude of tents still standing at the time of our arrival, and we saw there a quantity of barracks which were well adapted to aid the besiegers. It became necessary therefore for them to clear off all these things which were without, to take down the tents, and to burn the barracks. These movements it was not possible for them to effect, without enduring constant discharges on the part of the Indians, always ready to profit by these advantages which were afforded them. Their fire indeed would have been much more lively, and more fatal, if another object had not drawn off part of their attention. Some

horses and herds of cattle, which the besieged had not had time to place under cover, were wandering about on the low grounds which were situated in the neighborhood of the fort. For a time, therefore, the chase of these animals furnished the Indians with occupation. A hundred and fifty of the cattle either killed or taken, and fifty horses, were at first the fruits of this petty warfare; but these were only, as it were, the preliminaries and the preparatory steps for the siege.

Fort George was a square, flanked by four bastions; the curtains were strengthened with stakes; the trenches were sunk to the depth of from eighteen to twenty feet; the scarp and counterscarp were shelving and covered with shifting sand; the walls were built of large pine trees which had been felled, and sustained by stakes which were extremely massive, and from whence extended a platform of earth from fifteen to eighteen feet wide, which they had taken care to cover entirely with gravel. From four to five hundred men defended it by the aid of nineteen cannon, of which two were thirty-six pounders, the rest of less calibre, and also four or five mortars. The place was not protected by any other exterior work, except by a fortified entrenchment surrounded by palisades, which were strengthened by heaps of stones. The garrison within it consisted of seventeen hundred men, and continually recruited that of the fort. The principal strength of this entrenchment consisted in its situation, which commanded all around it, and was inaccessible to artillery except on the side, on account of the mountains and morasses which lined the different avenues leading to it.

Such was Fort George according to the information I have gained of these places since its surrender. It was not possible to invest it and block up all the passages. Six thousand French or Canadians and seventeen hundred Indians, which constituted all our force, were by no means equal to the immense extent of ground which it would have been necessary to encompass to ac-

complish that object. Twenty thousand men would scarcely have been sufficient for the purpose. The enemy had, therefore, always the benefit of one back-door to slip into the woods, which would have been a useful resource if the Indians had not been immediately before them; but rarely did they escape their hands when taking this road. Their quarters were, besides, on the Lydis road, so close in the neighborhood of the woods, and where they were accustomed so often to send out scouting parties, that to seek an asylum there would have been only to risk one's life. At a little distance were the lodges of the Canadians, placed on the summits of the mountains, and always near enough to assist them. Then the regular troops who had come from France, to whom properly belonged the labors of the siege, occupied the borders of the woods very near the ground on which it was necessary that the trench should be opened. The camp of reserve followed, furnished with sufficient forces to protect it from the danger of any insult.

These arrangements being made, the Marquis de Montcalm caused propositions to be made to the enemy, which, had they been accepted, would have saved much blood and many tears. It was very much in these terms that the letter of summons was written, which was addressed to M. Moreau, commander of the place in the name of his Britannic Majesty. "Sir, I have arrived with sufficient force to take the place which you hold, and to cut off all succors which can possibly come to you from any quarter. I number in my train a crowd of Indian tribes, whom the least effusion of blood will enrage to an extent which will forever prevent them from entertaining any sentiments of moderation or clemency. The love of humanity has therefore induced me to summon you to surrender at a time when it will not be impossible for me to induce them to agree to a capitulation honorable to you and useful for all. I have, &c." signed, MONTCALM. The bearer of this letter was M. Fontbrane, Aid de camp of M.

de Levi. He was received by the English officers, with many of whom he was acquainted, with that politeness and attention with which the laws of honor never dispense, when the war takes place between honorable men. But this favorable reception decided nothing with regard to the surrender of the place, as appeared by the answer. It was as follows: "Monsieur, the General Montcalm, I am obliged to you, for my part, for the courteous offers you have made; but I cannot accept them: I have little fear of your Indian forces. Besides, I have under my orders soldiers who are determined, like myself, to die or to conquer. I have, &c." signed, MOREAU.

The haughtiness of this answer was shortly afterwards published amidst the roar of a general discharge of the enemy's artillery. It was very desirable that we should be in a condition to give an immediate reply, but before we could be able to establish a single battery, it was necessary for us to transport our cannon a good half league over the rocks and through the woods. But owing to the voracity of the Indians, we were not able in this work to call in the aid of any of our beasts of burden. Tired, they said, of salt meat, they had no scruples a few days before in seizing them, to regale themselves, without consulting anything but their appetites. But in default of this aid, so many arms animated by courage and by zeal towards our sovereign, applied themselves with so good a grace to the labor, that all obstacles were shortly cleared away and vanquished, and the business itself carried through to its perfection.

During all these movements, I was lodged near the hospital, where I hoped to be at hand to give to the dying and the dead the appropriate aid of my ministry. I remained there for some time without receiving the least news of my Indians. This silence troubled me; I had a great desire to assemble them yet once more, to enable them to profit by the perilous circumstances in which they were, and to lead them, if it were possible, to those

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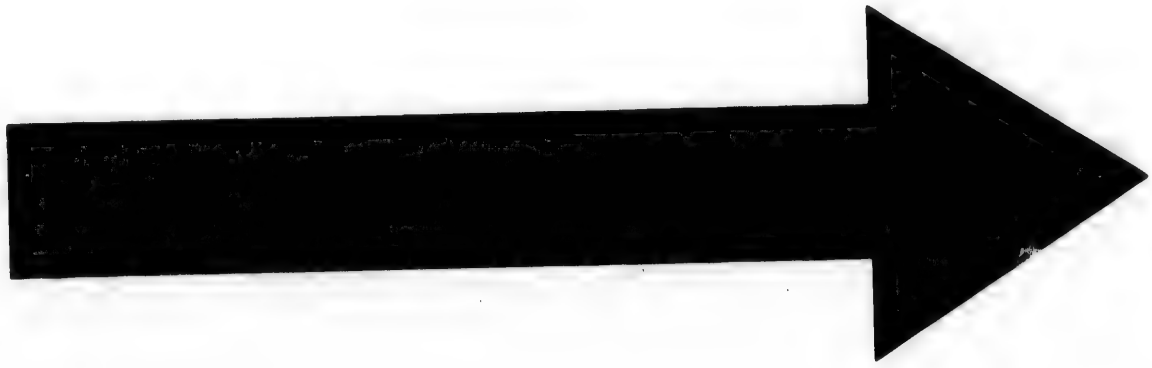

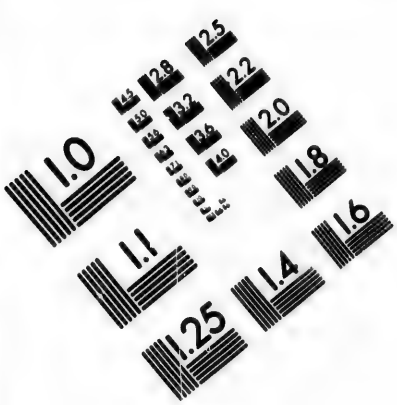

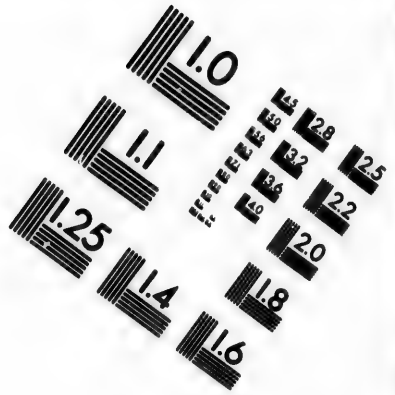

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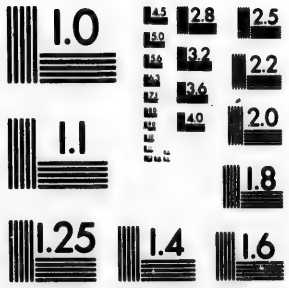

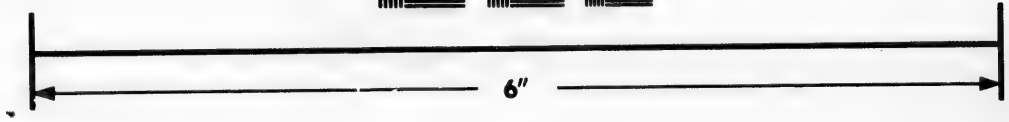

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feelings which were in accordance with their religion. With this view I determined to go and seek them. The journey had its difficulties and its dangers, besides its length. It was necessary for me to pass in the neighborhood of the trench, where a soldier busy in wondering at the great effect of a cannon ball on a tree, was shortly after himself, at only a few paces distance from me, the victim of his indiscretion. In pursuing my route, I will acknowledge to you, that I was struck with the air with which the French and Canadians bore themselves, in the midst of the painful toils and dangers which occupied them. To see the joy with which they transported to the trench the fascines and gabions, you would have taken them for persons invulnerable to the active and continual fire of the enemy. Such conduct announces clearly their bravery and love for their country; and this is the character of the nation. I went through all the quarters, without finding any of my Abnakis except a few groups dispersed here and there, so that I was obliged to retrace my steps, without gaining anything but the merit of my good intentions. Thus separated from my people, I had not the opportunity of being of much benefit to them; but my services were at least of some use in favor of a Moraigan prisoner, whose tribe is in the interests and almost entirely under the rule of England. He was a man whose figure assuredly possessed neither dignity nor grace. A head enormous in size, with little eyes, excessive corpulence united with a short body, legs thick and stumpy, all these traits with some others of the same kind, certainly entitled him to a place among the deformed. But to be thus unfortunate in appearance, does not at the same time deprive him of his claim to human nature, that is to say, it does not diminish his right to the attention and regards of Christian charity. He was indeed not less the victim of his unprepossessing appearance than of his bad fortune. Bound to the trunk of a tree, where his grotesque figure excited the curiosity of all who passed, hootings were at

first not spared, but bad treatment succeeded, until at last a blow rudely given almost tore one of his eyes from his head. This proceeding shocked me; I came to the aid of the afflicted, and standing by him I drove off all the spectators in a tone of authority, which without doubt I should never have dared to assume, if I had been less sensibly touched by his misfortunes. I stood sentinel by his side during a part of the day, and at last succeeded so well that I was able to interest these savages (his masters), in his favor, so that there was no further need of my presence to free him from persecution. I do not know whether he was very sensible of my services; at least, a glance of his dark eye was all that I could draw from him. But independent of all considerations of religion, I was well repaid by the mere pleasure of having succored one in misfortune. There were never wanting indeed some whose fate was equally to be deplored. Each day the activity and bravery of the Indians increased the number of prisoners, that is to say, of those who were doomed to misery. It was not possible for the enemy to stir a single step from the place, without exposing themselves either to captivity or death, so much were the Indians on the alert. You can judge of this by a single incident. An English woman determined to go and gather some vegetables in the kitchen gardens, almost contiguous to the trench of the place. Her hardihood cost her dear; for an Indian, concealed in a square of cabbages, perceived her, and with his gun struck her down on the spot. The enemy had no means of recovering and carrying off the dead body, and the conqueror, always concealed, remained sentinel through the day, and took away with him the scalp.

Nevertheless, all the Indian tribes began to grow weary on account of the silence of our great guns, as they called our cannon: they did not wish longer to take upon themselves the whole burden of the war, so that to content them, it was necessary to hasten the trench and to erect there our first battery. The first time it

played, such were the cries of joy that all the mountains resounded with the echoes. During the whole course of the siege, it was never necessary to make any great movement to learn the success of our artillery. The cries of the Indians at any time carried the intelligence to all parts of our camp.

I had been thinking seriously of abandoning my quarters, and the inaction to which I was condemned while there, by reason of my distance from my neophytes, determined me to do so. But before the change was made, we were forced to suffer a great alarm. The frequent journeys which during the day the enemy had made to their boats, had given rise to a suspicion that they were preparing some decisive stroke. The report had been spread, that their design was to burn our provisions and munitions of war, and M. de Launay, Captain of the Grenadiers in a Regiment of France, was therefore appointed to watch with the guard over the boats in which they were deposited. The arrangements he made were so skilful, that it is almost to be regretted that the enemy did not show themselves. These alarms having passed over, I rejoined my Abnakis, not to be separated from them again during the whole course of the campaign. Nothing worthy of note occurred during some days, except the promptness and rapidity with which the works of the trench advanced. The second battery was established two days afterwards. This was a new fête which the Indians celebrated in a warlike way. They were always about our artillery men, whose dexterity they much admired. But their admiration was neither idle nor without its use. They were willing to do anything to make themselves useful, and determined even to become gunners. One among them particularly distinguished himself. After having himself pointed the cannon, he directed it against the very angle of the fort which had been assigned to him as a mark. But he declined to repeat the experiment, notwithstanding the solicitations of the French, alleging as the reason of his refusal, that

having reached in his attempt that degree of perfection to which he aspired, he did not wish to hazard his reputation in a second trial.

But their chief cause of astonishment was the covered ways forming the different branches of the trench, which like subterranean roads are so useful to protect the assailants from the cannon of the besieged. They examined with the most eager curiosity the manner in which the French grenadiers labored to give these works the degree of perfection which they required. Instructed by seeing, they shortly began to exercise their own hands, in the practice. They might be seen armed with pick-axes, marking out a branch of the trench towards the fortified embankment, the attack of which had fallen to them in the division. They pushed them so far forward, that they were shortly within gun-shot. M. de Veillers, brother of M. de Jamonville, an officer whose name alone is a eulogy, profited by these advances, to attack the outworks of the entrenchment at the head of a Canadian corps. The action was warm, a long time disputed, and deadly to the enemy. They were driven from their outposts, and we have reason to believe that the grand entrenchments would have been taken that very day, if their capture could have decided the surrender of the place. Each day was thus signalized by some brilliant exploit on the part of the French, the Canadians, and the Indians.

The enemy however always sustained themselves by the hope of a speedy succor. A little incident which happened under those circumstances, ought to have diminished their confidence. Our scout encountered in the woods three couriers sent out from Fort Lydis; they killed the first, captured the second, while the third saved himself by his swiftness in running. They possessed themselves of a letter inserted in a hollow musket ball, so well concealed on the body of the dead, that it had escaped the researches of all the rest but those of a soldier who happened to be

acquainted with these kinds of tricks in war. The letter was signed by the Commander of Fort Lydis, and addressed to that of Fort George. It contained in substance the deposition of a Canadian, taken prisoner the first night of our arrival. According to this declaration, our army amounted to eleven thousand men, and the body of Indians to two thousand, while our artillery was most formidable. He was mistaken in this estimate, for our forces were amplified far beyond the truth. This error in calculation was not however to be attributed to fraud or deceit, which although in a case like this useful to the interests of the country, could not be justified in the judgment of an honorable man, even the most prejudiced and patriotic. Until this war the greatest number of the Canadian force had scarcely exceeded eight hundred men; surprise and astonishment increased the size of things to eyes which were little accustomed to estimate great objects. I was witness, in the course of the campaign, of mistakes of this kind which were much greater. The commander of Fort Lydis concluded his letter by informing his colleague, that the interests of the King his master did not permit him to weaken his post, and that he must therefore capitulate, and obtain conditions as advantageous as possible.

M. de Montcalm did not think he could make a better use of this letter, than to forward it to its address by the same courier who had fallen alive into our hands. He received in return from the English officer, his thanks, with an expression of the modest hope, that the same acts of politeness might for a long time take place between them. An equal compliment, whether he used the expression in jest, or he thus promised a long resistance. The actual condition of the place however did not predict this result. One part of their batteries was dismounted and rendered unserviceable by the success of ours, fear had spread among the besieged, so that they no longer acted as soldiers except by dint of giving them ardent spirits, while the frequent desertions announced its

approaching fall. Such was at least the general opinion of the deserters, of whom the number would have been much more considerable than it was, if the armed savages had not multiplied the perils of such a step.

Among those who came to give himself up to us was one, the subject of a neighboring nation, which was our faithful ally, who afforded me the sweet consolation of preparing the way for his approaching reconciliation to the Church. I went to visit him at the hospital, where he was confined with his wounds. In the beginning of the conversation, I learned that it was not difficult to induce him to receive in good faith the dogmas of our true religion, while the heart was in a situation to be no longer sensibly affected by the deceitful enticements of human passions.

I had scarcely returned from this expedition, which had cost me a walk of three leagues, but whose pains were well alleviated by the motives which had animated it, and the success with which they had been crowned, when I perceived a general movement in all quarters of our camp. Each corps was in motion, French, Canadian, and Indian—all were running to arms, and all were preparing for the combat. The news of the arrival of the succors so long expected by the enemy, had produced this sudden and general movement. In these moments of alarm, M. de Montcalm, with a coolness which showed the general, was providing for the security of the trenches, for the service of our batteries, and for the defence of our boats. He then withdrew, to go and place himself at the head of the army.

I was sitting quietly at the entrance of my tent, from whence I could see our troops defile, when an Abnakis came to arouse me from my tranquillity. Without any formality he thus addressed me: "My father, you have given us your word, that even at the peril of your life, you will not hesitate to furnish us the aid of your ministry. Can our wounded come to seek you here over the mountains which separate you from the place of combat? We

go, and we await the effect of these promises." An address so energetic rendered me forgetful of my fatigues. Setting out, I increased my speed, I passed beyond the regular troops, and at last, after a forced march, arrived on the ground, where my people, at the head of all the forces, were awaiting the conflict. Immediately I deputed some among them to assemble those who were dispersed about. I prepared myself to suggest to them those religious acts which were proper under the circumstances, and to give them a general absolution on the approach of the enemy; but they did not appear. M. de Montcalm, not to lose the benefit of so many movements, determined on a stratagem which might bring on the engagement which we had come to seek with so much trouble. He proposed to order the French and the Canadians together, to make a feint, while the Indians concealed in the woods should face the enemy, who would not fail to make a vigorous sortie. The expedient proposed to our Iroquois was an admirable invention, but they objected, on the ground that the day was too far advanced. The rest of the savages had in vain appealed from this judgment; the excuse was judged of sufficient weight, and was accepted; thus each returned to his post without having seen anything but the preparation for battle. At length, on the next day, being the Vigil of St. Laurence, the seventh day after our arrival, the trench having been pushed as far as the gardens around the fort, they prepared to establish our third and last battery. Its nearness to the fort gave us reason to hope, that in three or four days they would be able to make a general assault, by means of the breach, which would then be of sufficient size. But the enemy spared us the labor and danger, for they hoisted the French flag, and demanded terms of capitulation.

We now come to the surrender of the place, and the bloody catastrophe which followed. I doubt not but every corner of Europe has resounded with the news of this sad scene, as an outrage which perhaps recoiled upon the nation itself, and

branded it with dishonor. Your impartiality will enable you to judge in a moment, whether so flagrant an imputation could be derived from any source but ignorance or malignity. I shall only mention those facts, the publicity and truth of which are so incontestable, that without any fear of contradiction, I can sustain them by the testimony even of the English officers, who have been the witnesses and the victims. The Marquis de Montcalm, before he would listen to any terms, judged it right to take the opinion of all the Indian nations, for the purpose of conciliating them by this condescension, and rendering the treaty inviolable by their agreement. He therefore assembled all the chiefs, to whom he communicated the terms of capitulation, which granted the enemy the right of marching out of the place with the honors of war, and imposed upon them, besides the obligation of not serving during eighteen months against His Most Christian Majesty, that also of setting at liberty all the Canadians taken prisoners during this war. All these articles were universally applauded, and furnished with this seal of general approbation, the treaty was signed by the Generals of the two crowns. In consequence the French army in battle array advanced towards the place, to take possession in the name of His Most Christian Majesty, while the English troops, arrayed in beautiful order, marched out to go and shut themselves up till the next day in their entrenchments. Their march was not marked by any contravention of the laws of nations. But the Indians did not delay to strike their blow. During the military ceremony which accompanied the taking possession, they had penetrated into the place in crowds through the embrasures of the cannon, for the purpose of proceeding to the pillage, which it had been agreed to give up to them; but they did not confine themselves to pillage. There were still remaining in the casemates some sick persons whose condition had not allowed them to follow their countrymen in the honorable retreat which had been granted to their valor. These were there-

fore the first victims on whom they threw themselves without pity, and sacrificed to their bloodthirstiness. I was a witness of this spectacle. I saw one of these barbarians come forth from the casemates, which nothing but the most insatiate avidity for blood could have induced him to enter, for the infected atmosphere which exhaled from it was insupportable. He carried in his hand a human head, from whence streams of blood were flowing, and which he paraded forth as if it had been the most valuable prize he had been able to seize.

But this was only a slight prelude to the cruel tragedy of the morrow. Early in the morning the Indians began to assemble about the entrenchments, demanding of the English, goods, provisions, in a word everything valuable which their greedy eyes could perceive: but these demands were made in a tone which announced that a thrust of the spear would be the price of a refusal. Nor were these requirements rejected by the English. They undressed, they stripped themselves, they reduced themselves to nothing, to purchase at least their lives by this surrender of everything. This compliance should have softened the savages, but their heart is not like that of any other human being; you may say, that naturally it is the very seat of inhumanity. Nothing that had been done rendered them less disposed to go to the most severe extremes. A corps of the French troops, consisting of four hundred men, appointed to protect the retreat of the enemy, arrived and arranged themselves in haste. The English commenced filing out. Woe to those who closed the march, or to the stragglers whom illness or any other reason separated ever so little from the main body! They were as good as dead, and their lifeless bodies soon strewed the ground, and covered the circuit of the entrenchments. This butchery, which at first was only the work of some few savages, became the signal which transformed them all into so many ferocious beasts. They discharged right and left heavy blows with their hatchets on

those who came within their reach. The massacre however was not of any duration, nor was it by any means as considerable as so much fury would have seemed to give reason to fear; it did not exceed forty or fifty men. The patience of the English in thus being contented to bow their heads to the weapons of their executioners had the effect of shortly stopping the slaughter, but this did not turn the savages either to reason or equity. With fearful cries they engaged themselves in making prisoners.

I arrived while these things were going on, and I do not think that any one could partake of human nature, and remain insensible in such sad circumstances. The son snatched from a father's arms, the daughter torn from the bosom of her mother, the husband separated from his wife, the officers stripped to their shirts, without respect for their rank or for decency, a crowd of unhappy beings who were running about at random, some towards the woods, others towards the tents of the French, these towards the fort, those towards places which seemed to promise them an asylum; such were the pitiable objects which presented themselves to my eyes. Nevertheless, the French were not by any means indolent spectators, or insensible to this catastrophe. The Chevalier de Levi ran in all directions where the tumult seemed most violent, to endeavor to remedy it, with a courage animated by the kindness so natural to his illustrious blood. A thousand times he faced death, which, notwithstanding his birth and his virtues, he could not have escaped, if a particular providence had not watched over the safety of his life, and arrested the savage arms already raised to strike him. The French and Canadian officers imitated his example with a zeal worthy of the humanity which has always characterized the nation, but the great body of our troops, occupied in guarding our batteries and the fort, was by its distance entirely prevented from rendering him any assistance. And what avail were four hundred men against about fifteen hundred furious savages, who could scarcely

distinguish us from the enemy? One of our sergeants who had opposed himself bravely to their violence, was struck to the earth by the blow of a spear. One of our French officers, as the reward of the same zeal, received a severe wound which brought him to the borders of the grave. Besides, in this moment of alarm, one scarcely knew to which side to turn. Those very measures which seemed to be most dictated by prudence, ended in disastrous and unfortunate results.

M. de Montcalm, who, on account of the distance of his tent, did not learn till a late hour what was going on, at the very first news of this occurrence repaired to the spot, with a speed which marked the goodness and generosity of his heart. He multiplied himself, he seemed endowed with ubiquity, he was everywhere; prayers, menaces, promises, were used, he tried everything, and at last resorted to force. He thought it was due to the birth and the merit of Colonel Yonn, to wrest by authority and with violence, his nephew from the hands of an Indian; but, alas! his deliverance cost the lives of a number of prisoners whom their tyrants massacred immediately through the fear of a similar act of rigor. The tumult nevertheless was constantly on the increase, when some one happily thought of crying to the English, who formed a considerable body, to increase their speed. This forced march had its effect. The Indians, partly on account of the uselessness of pursuit, and partly because they were satisfied with their prizes, began to retire, until the few who remained were easily dispersed. The English, without interruption, continued their route to Fort Lydis, where they arrived at first to the number of three or four hundred. I am ignorant of the number of those who having gained the woods, were so happy as to reach the place by aid of the cannon, which they took care to fire during several days to guide them.

The rest of the garrison however had not all perished by the sword, neither were they groaning under a load of chains.

Many had found safety in the tents of the French or in the fort. It was thither that I repaired, after the disorders were in some degree over. A crowd of weeping females came to surround me. They threw themselves at my knees, they kissed the bottom of my robe, uttering from time to time lamentable cries which pierced my heart. It was not in my power to dry up the source of their tears; they demanded again their sons, their daughters, their husbands, whose removal they deplored. Could I restore these to them? But at least I had an opportunity which just then offered itself to diminish the number of these miserable beings, and I embraced it with avidity. A French officer informed me that a Huron at that very time in the camp, had in his possession an infant of six months, whose death was certain if I did not immediately hasten to its rescue. I did not for a moment hesitate. I ran in haste to the cabin of the savage, in whose arms I saw the innocent victim, who was tenderly kissing the hands of his spoiler, and playing with some collars of porcelain which he wore. The sight gave new ardor to my zeal. I began by flattering the Huron with all the praises which truth enabled me to bestow on the valor of his nation. He saw my object at once. "Hold," said he to me, very civilly, "do you see this infant? I have not by any means stolen it: I found it left behind in haste; you want it, but you shall not have it." In reply to all that I could urge with regard to the uselessness of his prisoner, and its certain death for want of the nourishment proper for its tender age, he produced some fat with which to feed it; adding, that after all he should find, in case of its death, some corner of ground in which to bury it, and that then I should be free to give it my blessing. I replied to his speech by the offer to give him a sufficiently large sum in silver if he would surrender up his little captive, but he persisted in his refusal. He finally lowered his terms to the demand of another English captive in exchange. If he had made no farther dimi-

nution in his requirements, it would have been settled with regard to the infant's life. I thought indeed that its sentence of death was pronounced, when I saw the Huron holding a consultation with his companions; for until then the conversation had been carried on in French, which he understood. This parley disclosed a ray of hope to my eyes; nor was I disappointed. The result was, that the infant should be given to me, if I would deliver to him in return the scalp of an enemy. The proposition however did not at all embarrass me. "It shall be forthcoming shortly," I replied to him, rising, "if you are a man of honor."

Departing with haste to the camp of the Abnakis, I demanded of the first person I met, whether he had any scalps, and whether he wished to do a favor to gratify me. I had every reason to be pleased with his complaisance, for he untied his pouch and gave me my choice. Provided with one of these barbarous trophies, I carried it off in triumph, followed by a crowd of French and Canadians, curious to know the issue of the adventure. Joy seemed to furnish me with wings, and in a moment I had rejoined my Huron. "See," said I, in meeting him, "see your payment." "You are right," he replied, "it is indeed an English scalp, for it is red." This is in truth the color which ordinarily distinguishes the English colonists in these countries. "Well! there is the infant, carry it away, it belongs to you." I did not give him time to retract, but immediately took the unfortunate little being in my hands. As it was almost naked, I wrapped it in my robe, but it was not accustomed to be carried by hands as little used to this business as mine, and the poor infant uttered its cries, which taught me as much my own awkwardness as its suf ferings. I consoled myself however, with the hope of presently calming it, by placing it in more tender hands.

I arrived at the fort, and at the sound of its feeble cries all the women ran towards me. Each one flattered herself with the

hope of recovering the object of her maternal tenderness. They eagerly examined it, but neither the eyes nor the heart of any one recognized in it her child. They therefore retired again to one side, to give anew free course to their lamentations and complaints. I found myself placed in no little embarrassment by this retreat. Being four or five leagues distant from every French habitation, how could I procure nourishment for an infant of so tender an age? I was absorbed in my reflections, when I saw an English officer pass who happened to be well acquainted with the French language. I addressed him therefore in a firm tone: "Sir, I have just ransomed this young infant from slavery, but it will not escape death, unless you direct some one of these women to take the place of its mother, and nurse it, until I shall be able to provide for it otherwise." The French officers who were present supported my request. With that he spoke to the English women. One of them offered to render it this service, if I would be willing to answer for her life and that of her husband, to charge myself with their support, and to see that they were conveyed to Boston from Montreal. I immediately accepted the proposition, and requested M. du Bourg-la-Marque to detach three grenadiers to escort my English to the Canadian camp, where I flattered myself that I should find means to fulfil my new engagements. This worthy officer responded with kindness to my request.

I was about quitting the fort, when the father of the infant was found, wounded by the bursting of a bomb, and utterly unable to succor himself. He could not therefore but acquiesce with pleasure in the arrangements I had made for the security of his child, and I departed, accompanied by my English, under the safeguard of three grenadiers. After a march of two hours, painful though happy, we arrived at the quarter where the Canadians were posted. I cannot undertake to portray to you faithfully the new occurrence which here crowned my enterprise, for

it is one of those events which a person flatters himself in vain with the hope of presenting true to nature. We had scarcely reached the entrance of the camp, when a shrill and animated cry suddenly struck my ears. Was it a cry of grief? or was it of joy? It was all this, and much more, for it was that of the mother, who from a distance had recognized her child, so keen are the eyes of maternal love. She ran with a precipitation which showed that this was indeed her child. She snatched it from the arms of the English woman with an eagerness which seemed as if she feared that some one might a second time deprive her of it. It is easy to imagine to what transports of joy she abandoned herself, particularly when she was assured of the life and the freedom of her husband, to whom she thought that she had bid a final adieu. Nothing was wanting to complete their happiness but their reunion, and this I thought should be the perfection of my work.

I again directed my course back to the fort. My strength was scarcely sufficient to carry me thither, for it was more than an hour after the middle of the day, and I had not as yet taken any nourishment. I was therefore very near falling through faintness on my arrival there, but the politeness and charity of the French officers presently placed me in a condition to continue the good work. I went in search of the Englishman in question, but my enquiries were for some hours without success. The pain of his wounds had obliged him to retire to the most solitary place in the fort, and there I at last found him. I had made arrangements to have him carried away, when his wife and child again made their appearance. Orders had been given to collect all the English, who were dispersed in the different quarters, to the number of nearly five hundred, and to conduct them to the fort, that we might provide more surely for their support until it should be possible to send them to Orange, as was happily done some days afterwards. The demonstrations of joy were renewed

at their meeting, with much more earnestness than before. Expressions of gratitude were not wanting to myself, not only on the part of those most interested, but again from the English officers, who had the goodness to reiterate them more than once. As to their offers of service, I cared not for them except as showing the sentiments from which they had their origin. A person in my condition has no recompense to look for except from God alone.

I should not here pass over in silence the reward of her charity which the other English woman received, who had been obliged to act as mother to the child in the absence of the true mother. Providence, through the intervention of M. Picquet, brought about the recovery of her own child, which had been unjustly taken from her.

I remained as yet for some days in the neighborhood of the fort, where my ministry was not unfruitful, both with respect to some prisoners, whose chains I was happy enough to break, and some French officers whose lives were threatened by the drunkenness of the Indians, and to whose rescue I arrived when they were in an extremity.

Such have been the circumstances of this unfortunate expedition, which has brought disgrace on the valor of the Indians, after it had shone forth so brightly during the whole course of the siege, and has rendered their services burthensome to us. They, however, pretend to justify their conduct. The Abnakis in particular, on the ground of reprisals, alleging that more than once, even in the midst of peace, or during parleys, such as took place in the course of the past winter, their warriors had found their graves through treacherous attacks in the English forts of Acadia. I have neither the sources of information nor the knowledge to enable me to judge a nation, who, although our enemy, has many claims to our respect. For the rest, I do not know that in the whole progress of this narrative, a single incident has

been set forth by me whose certainty they could with justice impeach; and still less can I persuade myself that malignity itself will be able to discover a single fact which could authorize the throwing back on the French nation the disgrace of this occurrence.

They had made the Indians agree to the terms of the capitulation; could they take any course more surely to prevent its infraction?

They had assigned to the enemy, to protect their retreat, an escort of four hundred men, some of whom have even been the victims of a zeal too ardent in repressing the disorder; were they able more efficaciously to prevent the breach of the treaty?

They have indeed since gone so far as to purchase the English captives at great expence, and to procure them at a heavy ransom from the hands of the savages, so that nearly four hundred are now at Quebec, ready to embark for Boston. Could they more sincerely repair the violation of this treaty? These considerations seem to me not to admit of a reply.

The Indians then alone are responsible for this violation of the laws of nations. And it is to their insatiable ferocity and their lawlessness alone that we can attribute it. The news of this fatal execution spread through the English colonies, and caused such affliction and fear that a single savage dared to push his temerity so far as to go to take prisoners almost at the gates of Orange, without suffering any molestation either in his expedition or his retreat. Thus the enemy formed no enterprise against us during the days which followed the capture of the fort. Nothing, however, could be more critical than the situation in which the French army then found itself. The Indians, including even the Abnakis and the Nipistingues, had disappeared since the day of their unhappy expedition; twelve hundred men were occupied in the destruction of the fort, and nearly a thousand were employed in transporting the immense stores of provisions and

munitions of war of which we had become masters. There scarcely remained a handful to make head against the enemy if he had taken an offensive position. But his quietness furnished us the opportunity of consummating our work. Fort George was destroyed and entirely demolished, and even the ruins were consumed by fire. It was only during this burning that we learned the greatness of the enemy's loss. The casemates and the subterranean passages were found to be filled with dead bodies, which, during several days, furnished new aliment to the activity of the flames. As to our loss, it consisted of twenty-one killed, of whom three were Indians, and about twenty-five wounded. That was all.

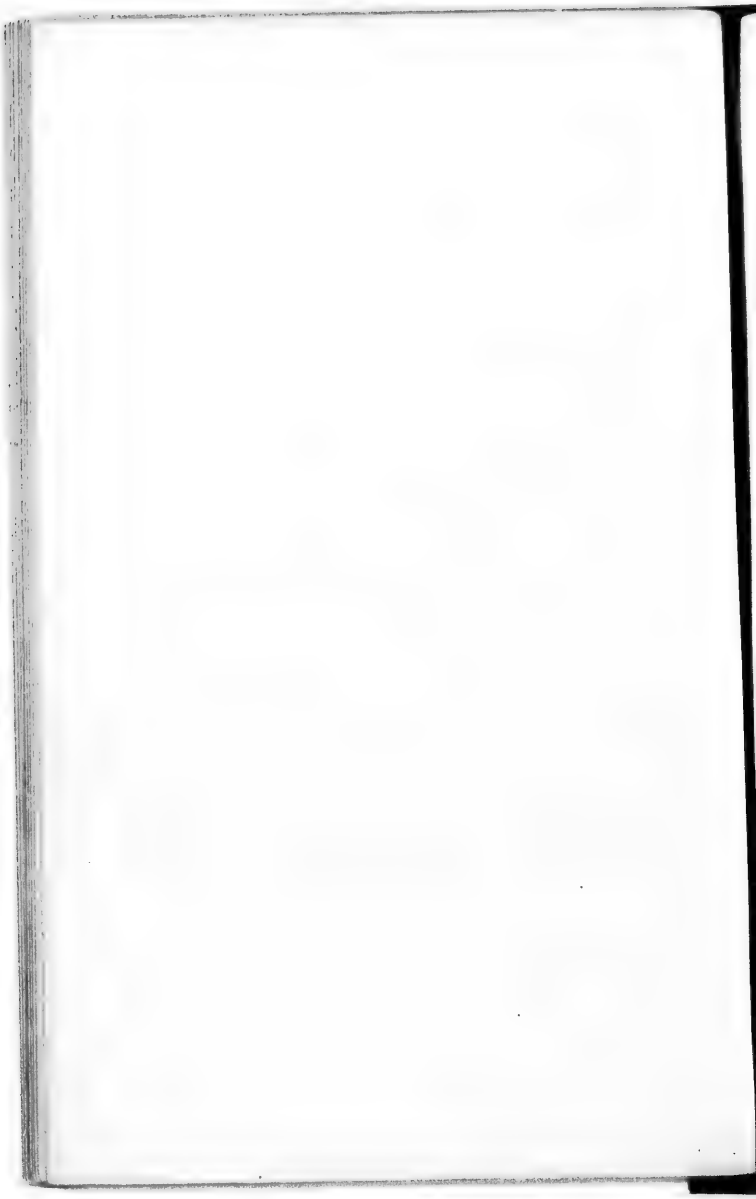
At last, on the Festival of the Assumption, I re-entered my boat to return to Montreal, at the season which is both the most rainy and the coldest. The voyage was only marked by a continual succession of storms and tempests, which came near sinking one of our boats, and destroying the conductors. But our toils were well alleviated, not only by the company of the other Missionaries, but also by that of M. Fiesch, who was sent to Montreal in the capacity of hostage. This officer, a Swiss by birth, and formerly in the service of France, is one of the most honorable men that can be found. During his residence in the midst of the colony, he has served the nation to which he is bound with a fidelity worthy of all praise.

Arrived at Montreal, I expected to take some necessary repose; but the Indians there so multiplied my duties, and which yet were of a nature so little satisfactory, that I hastened my departure for my mission. I had one reason, indeed, which more hurried me, that I might endeavor to discharge the promise I had made to the English officers, to spare no means in the settlement to induce the Indians to restore the rest of the prisoners. And it was full time that I took hold of this business. One of our Canadians who had escaped from prison in New England, was

loud in his denunciations of the bad treatment which he had suffered there, and even reported that one of the Abnakis, taken in the action of M. de Dieskau, had during the winter perished from hunger in the prisons at Orange. This news spread abroad would have caused the death of many innocent persons. I adopted the course of burying it in a profound silence, which has favored the departure of many of the English unjustly detained in slavery.

Such is a faithful history of all the events which have marked the campaign which has just ended. It has enabled you to see with satisfaction, that French valor has there sustained itself with honor, and has worked wonders. But you have been able also to see that passions, ever the same, produce everywhere the same ravages, and that our Indians, in being Christians, are not in this particular more irreprehensible in their conduct. Their wandering and vagabond life is one of the principal causes of their difficulties. Abandoned to themselves, and to the sway of their passions, without being even sustained by the aid of any formal service of their religion, during a greater part of the year they escape from the influence of the most active zeal which can be exerted in their behalf, and which condemned during this long term to the most sad inaction, is reduced to the necessity of being able to form in their favor nothing but good wishes, which almost always are futile and superfluous. Perhaps the God of mercy will one day enlighten these unhappy beings, on the dangers of their strange manner of life, and will fix their instability and wanderings. But if this be an event for which it is permitted to a Missionary to hope, it is not in his power to bring it about.

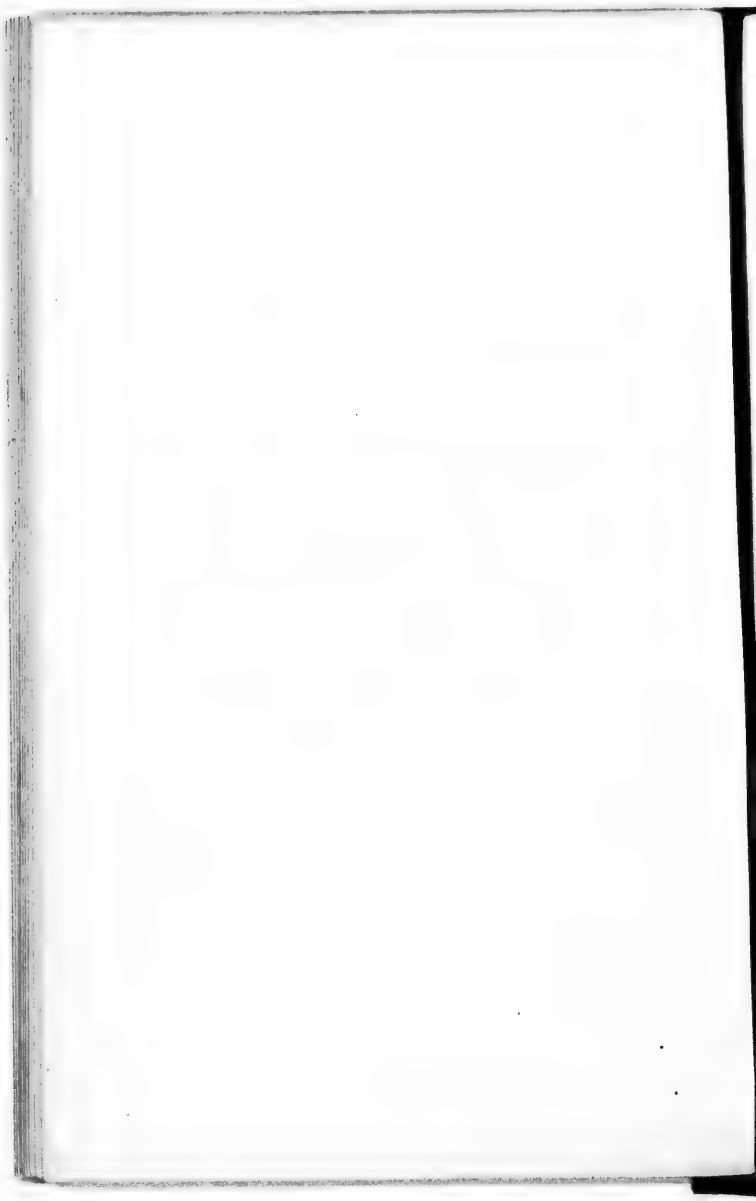
I have the honor to be, &c.



FATHER MAREST'S JOURNEYS

THROUGH ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN.

1712.



LETTER VII.

FROM FATHER GABRIEL MAREST,* MISSIONARY OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, TO FATHER GERMON OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

At Cascaskias, an Illinois Village, otherwise called, 'Of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin,' the 9th of November, 1712.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

I WISH I was able to give you such information with regard to our Missions, as would correspond with the idea which you have perhaps formed. The account which one hears all his days in Europe of those vast countries in the East, thickly sown with villages and settlements, where an innumerable multitude of idolaters present themselves in crowds to the zeal of the missionary, naturally leads him to believe that things are here in the same condition. Here, on the contrary, my Reverend Father, in a great extent of country, we scarcely find three or four villages. Our life is passed in roaming through thick forests, in

[* In 1694 Father Marest accompanied the expedition of the celebrated d'Iberville, from Montreal to Hudson's Bay, with the force intended to capture the English forts at the latter place. The object of the enterprise succeeded and Marest commenced a mission to the neighboring Indians who are buried in almost perpetual snows. His diary of the expedition and winter spent there is full of interest, and the writer had translated it for publication with these letters. The size of the volume however obliged him to omit it. In 1695 the forts were retaken by the English, and Father Marest was sent prisoner to Plymouth. We now find him, after a lapse of seventeen years, laboring on the prairies of Illinois.]

clambering over the mountains, in paddling the canoe across lakes and rivers, to catch a single poor savage who flies from us, and whom we can tame neither by teachings nor by caresses.

Nothing is more difficult than the conversion of these Indians; it is a miracle of the Lord's mercy. It is necessary first to transform them into men, and afterwards to labor to make them Christians. As they are absolute masters of themselves, without being subject to any law, the independence in which they live, enslaves them to the most brutal passions. There are, however, chiefs among them, but they have no authority. If they should resort to threats, so far from making themselves feared, they would find themselves immediately abandoned by the very persons who had chosen them to their office. They do not draw to themselves consideration and respect, except when they have, as they express it here, something to fill the kettle, that is, something with which to give feasts to those who should obey them.

It is this independence indeed which is the origin of all kinds of vices which rule them. They are lazy, treacherous, fickle and inconstant, deceitful, naturally thievish, so as even to glory in their address in stealing, brutal, without honor, without truth, ready to promise any thing for those who are liberal to them, but at the same time ungrateful and without thankfulness. The only effect produced by conferring a favor freely upon them, is to strengthen them in their natural arrogance; it only renders them more insolent. "He fears me," they say, "for he courts me." Thus, whatever good will one may have to oblige them, he is restrained, that he may force them to value any little services he may render them.

Gluttony and the love of pleasure are above all those vices which are most prominent among our Indians. They become addicted to a most disgraceful habit of life, even before they are of sufficient age to know the shame which is attached to it. If you add to this the wandering life they pass in the forests in the

pursuit of wild beasts, you will easily agree that reason must be entirely stupified in this race, and that they are almost incapable of submitting themselves to the yoke of the Gospel. But the farther they are removed from the kingdom of God, so much the more should our zeal be animated to cause them to approach it, and to make them enter there. Persuaded that we can do nothing of ourselves, we know at the same time that all things are possible through the aid of Him for whom we labor. We have even this advantage in the conversions which God has been willing to effect through our ministry, that we are freed from all danger of pride, or any reference we might make to ourselves. We cannot attribute these conversions, either to the forcible arguments of the Missionary, or to his eloquence, or to his other talents which might be useful in other countries, but can produce no impression on the minds of our Indians: we can render the glory to Him alone, who even of the stones knows how to make, when it pleases Him, children unto Abraham.

Our Illinois dwell in a most delightful country. It is, nevertheless, not as enchanting as it is represented to us by the author of the new relation of Southern America, which has appeared under the name of the Chevalier de Tonti. I have, however, heard it said by M. de Tonti himself, that he disowned the work, and that he recognized nothing of it but his own name upon the title-page.*

[* Chevalier de Tonti was an Italian veteran, who as lieutenant to La Salle accompanied him in all his expeditions through the West and South-West, from 1680 to the melancholy death of La Salle in 1687. An apocraphal set of legends, full of geographical contradictions, was published under the title — "Les dernières Découvertes dans l'Amérique-Septentrionale de Cavelier De la Salle, et les aventures de Chevalier Tonti, Gentilhomme Italien, compagnon de M. De la Salle, depuis 1678 jusqu'en 1690: *Paris*, 1697." This is probably the work to which Father Marest refers. Charlevoix seems in some cases to have copied its errors.]

We must acknowledge, however, that the country is very beautiful. There are great rivers which water it, vast and dense forests, delightful prairies, and hills covered with thick woods. All these make a charming variety. Although the country is farther south than Provence, yet the winter is longer, but the cold is not very severe. During the summer the heat is less oppressive, for the air is cooled by the forests, and the multitude of rivers, lakes, and ponds which intersect the country.

The Illinois river empties into the Mississippi, at the 39th degree of latitude. It is about one hundred and fifty leagues in length, but can scarcely be said to be very navigable except in the spring. It runs towards the south-west, and comes from the north-east, or east-north-east. The plains and prairies are all covered with buffaloes, roebucks, hinds, stags, and different kinds of fallow deer. The feathered game is also there in the greatest abundance. We find particularly quantities of swans, geese, bustards, and ducks. The wild oats which grow naturally on the plains, fattens them to such a degree, that they often die from being smothered in their own grease. Turkeys are also found there in great numbers, and are equally good with those in France.

The country is not bounded by the river Illinois. It also extends along the Mississippi on both sides, and is about two hundred leagues in length, and more than one hundred in breadth. The Mississippi is one of the most beautiful rivers in the world: during the few last years a boat has ascended it to the extent of eight hundred leagues, where water-falls* prevented it from going farther.

Seven leagues below the mouth of the Illinois river, we find a large river called the Missouri,† or more commonly *Pekitanoui*,

[* Falls of St. Anthony]

† Some of the other missionaries assert that the water of the Missouri is better and clearer than that of the Mississippi.

that is to say, muddy water, which discharges itself into the Mississippi on the western side. It is exceedingly rapid, and soils the beautiful water of the Mississippi, which flows from thence to the sea. Its source is in the north-west, very near the mines which the Spaniards have in Mexico, and therefore very convenient for the French who are journeying into that country.

About eighty leagues below, on the side of the river Illinois, that is to say, on the eastern side, (for the general course of the Mississippi is from north to south,) is the mouth of again another fine river, called *Ouabache.** It comes from the east-north-east, and has three branches, one of which extends to the country of the Iroquois, another towards Virginia and Carolina, and the third even to the *Miamis*. It is said that silver mines have been found there. This, however, is certain, that there are in that country mines of lead and tin, and should some miners by profession come to make excavations in these lands, they might perhaps find mines of copper and other metals.

Besides these large rivers which water the country to such an extent, there are also a great number of those which are smaller. It is on one of these rivers that our village is situated, on the eastern side, between the rivers *Ouabache* and *Pekitanoui*. We are in the 38th degree of latitude. Large numbers of buffaloes and bears can be seen, which feed on the banks of the river *Ouabache*. The flesh of the young bears is a very delicate meat.

The marshes are filled with roots, some of which are excellent, as are also the potatoes, and other productions of which it would be useless to give here the barbarous names. The trees too are very lofty and fine. There is one to which they have given the name of Cedar of Lebanon; it is a large tree, very straight, which does not throw out any branches except at the top, where they form a kind of crown. The copal is another tree from

[* The Ohio River.]

which they procure a gum, which spreads an odor equally agreeable with that of incense.

Fruit trees are not found here in great numbers. There are some apple-trees and wild plum-trees, which would produce perhaps good fruit if they were grafted. There are plenty of mulberry-trees, the fruit of which is not as large as in France, and different kinds of nut trees. The *pacanes*, (the name they have for one kind of these nuts,) are of better taste than our nuts in France. They have brought us peach trees up the Mississippi, which reached here without difficulty. But among the fruits of the country, those which appeared to me the best, and which would certainly be esteemed in France, are the *Piakimina* and the *Racemina*. The latter are nearly twice the length of a finger, and about as large round as the arm of an infant; the former most resemble the medlar, with the exception that the crown of it is smaller. We have also grapes, but they are only moderately good. The vines grow to the tops of trees, where it is necessary to gather the fruit. We have often been obliged to make wine of them, for want of any other kind for the service of the Mass. Our Indians are not accustomed to gather the fruit from the trees, they think it much easier to cut down the trees themselves, and to this it is owing that there are scarcely any fruit trees about the villages.

It would seem as if a country so beautiful, and as widely extended as this, ought to be sown with villages thickly populated; there are however but three, counting our own, one of which is more than a hundred leagues from here, where there are eight or nine hundred savages, and the other is on the Mississippi, at the distance of twenty-five leagues from our settlement. The men are generally of a tall stature, very active and good runners, having been accustomed from their most tender youth to run in the forests after the game. They only cover themselves at the waist, leaving the rest of the body entirely naked. As to the females,

they cover also the breast with a piece of deer skin. But they are all modestly clothed when they come to the Church. Then, they wrap the body in a large skin, or clothe themselves well in a robe made of many skins sewed together.

The Illinois are much less barbarous than the other Indians Christianity and their intercourse with the French have by degrees somewhat civilized them. This is particularly remarked in our village, of which the inhabitants are almost all Christians, and has brought many French to establish themselves here, three of whom we have recently married to Illinois women. These Indians are not at all wanting in wit, they are naturally curious, and are able to use raillery in a very ingenious way. The chase and war are the sole occupations of the men, while the rest of the labor falls upon the women and girls. They are the persons who prepare the ground for sowing, do the cooking, pound the corn, build the wigwams, and carry them on their shoulders in their journeys These wigwams are constructed of mats made of platted reeds, which they have the skill to sew together in such a way that the rain cannot penetrate when they are new. Besides these things they occupy themselves in manufacturing articles from buffalo's hair, and in making bands, belts, and sacks; for the buffaloes here are very different from our cattle in Europe. Besides having a large hump on the back by the shoulders, they are also entirely covered with a fine wool, which answers the purpose to our Indians of that which they would procure from sheep, if they had them in the country.

The women thus occupied and depressed by their daily toils, are more docile to the truths of the Gospel. This however is not the case at the lower end of the Mississippi, where the idleness which prevails among persons of that sex, gives opportunity for the most fearful disorders, and removes them entirely from the way of safety.

It would be difficult to say what is the religion of our Indians.

It consists entirely in some superstitions with which their credulity is amused. As all their knowledge is limited to an acquaintance with brutes, and to the necessities of life, it is to these things also that all their worship is confined. Their medicine-men, who have a little more intellect than the rest, gain their respect by their ability to deceive them. They persuade them that they honor a kind of Spirit, to whom they give the name of *Manitou*, and teach them, that it is this Spirit which governs all things, and is master of life and of death. A bird, a buffalo, a bear, or rather the plumage of the birds, and the skin of these beasts, such is their *Manitou*. They hang it up in their wigwams, and offer to it sacrifices of dogs and other animals.

The braves carry their *Manitous* in a mat, and unceasingly invoke them to obtain the victory over their enemies. Their medicine-men have in like manner recourse to their *Manitous* when they compose their remedies, or when they attempt to cure the diseased. They accompany their invocations with chants, and dances, and frightful contortions, to induce the belief that they are inspired by their *Manitous;* and at the same time they thus aggravate their diseases, so that they often cause death. During these different contortions, the medicine-man names sometimes one animal, and sometimes another, and at last applies himself to suck that part of the body in which the sick person perceives the pain. After having done so for some time, he suddenly raises himself and throws out to him the tooth of a bear, or of some other animal, which he had kept concealed in his mouth. "Dear friend," he cries, "you will live. See what it was that was killing you." After which he says, in applauding himself—"Who can resist my *Manitou?* Is he not the one who is the master of life?" If the patient happens to die, he immediately has some deceit ready prepared, to ascribe the death to some other cause which took place after he had left the sick man. But if on the contrary he should recover his health, it is then that

the medicine-man receives consideration, and is himself regarded as a *Manitou;* and after having well rewarded his labors, they procure the best that the village produces, to regale him.

The influence which these kinds of jugglers have, places a great obstacle in the way of the conversion of the Indians. By embracing Christianity they expose themselves to their insults and violence. It is only a month ago that a young Christian girl experienced this treatment. Holding a rosary in her hand she was passing before the wigwam of one of these impostors. He had imagined that the sight of a similar chapelet had caused the death of his father, and inspired therefore with fury, he took his gun, and was on the point of firing at this poor neophyte, when he was arrested by some Indians who happened to be present.

I cannot tell you how many times I have received the like insults from them, nor how many times I should have expired under their blows, had it not been for the particular protection of God, who has preserved me from their fury. On one occasion, among others, one of them would have split my head with his hatchet, had I not turned at the very time that his arm was raised to strike me. Thanks to God, our village is now purged from these impostors. The care which we have ourselves taken of the sick, the remedies we have given them, and which have generally produced a cure, have destroyed the credit and reputation of these medicine-men, and forced them to go and establish themselves elsewhere.

There are, however, some among them who are not so entirely brutal, and with whom we can sometimes talk, and endeavor to disabuse them of the vain confidence they have in their *Manitous:* but it is not ordinarily with much success. A conversation which one of our Fathers had with one of these medicine-men, will enable you to understand the extent of their obstinacy on this point, and also what ought to be the condescension of a Mission

ary, in attempting even to refute opinions as extraordinary as those with which they are here met.

The French had established a fort on the river *Ouabache:* they asked for a Missionary, and the Father Mermet was sent to them. This Father thought that he should also labor for the conversion of the *Mascoutens*, who had formed a settlement on the banks of the same river, a tribe of Indians who understood the Illinois language, but whose extreme attachment to the superstitions of their medicine-men rendered them exceedingly indisposed to listen to the instructions of the Missionary.

The course which Father Mermet took, was to confound in their presence one of their medicine-men, who worshipped the buffalo as his grand *Manitou.* After having insensibly led him to confess that it was not by any means the buffalo which he worshipped, but a *Manitou* of the buffalo, which is under the earth, which animates all the buffaloes, and which gives life to their sick; he asked him whether the other beasts, as the bears, for example, which his comrades worshipped, were not equally animated by a *Manitou* which is under the earth. "Certainly," replied the medicine-man. "But if this be so," said the Missionary, "then men ought also to have a *Manitou* which animates them." "Nothing can be more certain," said the medicine-man. "That is sufficient for me," replied the Missionary, "to convict you of having but little reason on your side; for if man who is on the earth be the master of all the animals—if he kills them, if he eats them, then it is necessary that the *Manitou* which animates the men should also be the master of all the other *Manitous.* Where is, then, your wisdom, that you do not invoke him who is the master of all the others?" This reasoning disconcerted the medicine-man, but this was the only effect which it produced, for they were not less attached than before to their ridiculous superstitions.

At that same time a contagious disease desolated their village.

and each day carried off many of the Indians: the medicine-men themselves were not spared, and died like the rest. The Missionary thought that he would be able to win their confidence by his attention to the care of the sick, and therefore applied himself to it without intermission; but his zeal very often came near costing him his life. The services which he rendered to them were repayed only by outrages. There were even those who proceeded to the extremity of discharging their arrows at him, but they fell at his feet; it may be that they were fired by hands which were too feeble, or because God, who destined the Missionary for other labors, had wished to withdraw him at that time from their fury. Father Mermet, however, was not deterred from conferring baptism on some of the Indians, who requested it with importunity, and who died a short time after they had received it.

Nevertheless, their medicine-men removed to a short distance from the fort, to make a great sacrifice to their *Manitou*. They killed nearly forty dogs, which they carried on the tops of poles, singing, dancing, and making a thousand extravagant gestures. The mortality, however, did not cease, for all their sacrifices. The chief of the medicine-men then imagined that their *Manitou*, being less powerful than the *Manitou* of the French, was obliged to yield to him. In this persuasion he many times made a circuit around the fort, crying out with all his strength, "We are dead; softly, *Manitou* of the French, strike softly, do not kill us all." Then, addressing himself to the Missionary, "Cease, good *Manitou*, let us live; you have life and death in your possession; leave death, give us life." The Missionary calmed him, and promised to take even more care of the sick than he had hitherto done; but notwithstanding all the care he could bestow, more than half in the village died.

To return to our Illinois; they are very different from these Indians, and also from what they formerly were themselves.

Christianity, as I have already said, has softened their savage customs, and their manners are now marked by a sweetness and purity which have induced some of the French to take their daughters in marriage. We find in them, moreover, a docility and ardor for the practice of Christian virtues. The following is the order we observe each day in our Mission:—Early in the morning we assemble the catechumens at the Church, where they have prayers, they receive instruction, and chant some canticles. When they have retired, Mass is said, at which all the Christians assist, the men placed on one side and the women on the other; then they have prayers, which are followed by giving them a homily, after which each one goes to his labor. We then spend our time in visiting the sick, to give them the necessary remedies, to instruct them, and to console those who are laboring under any affliction.

After noon the catechising is held, at which all are present, Christians and catechumens, men and children, young and old, and where each, without distinction of rank or age, answers the questions put by the Missionary. As these people have no books, and are naturally indolent, they would shortly forget the principles of religion, if the remembrance of them was not recalled by these almost continual instructions. Our visits to their wigwams occupy the rest of the day.

In the evening all assemble again at the Church, to listen to the instructions which are given, to have prayers, and to sing some hymns. On Sundays and Festivals they add to the ordinary exercises, instructions which are given after the Vespers. The zeal with which these good neophytes repair to the Church at all such hours is admirable: they break off from their labors, and run from a great distance to be there at the appointed time. They generally end the day by private meetings which they hold at their own residences, the men separately from the women, and there they recite the chapelet with alternate choirs, and chant the

hymns, until the night is far advanced. These hymns are their best instructions, which they retain the more easily, since the words are set to airs with which they are acquainted and which please them.

They often approach the Sacraments, and the custom among them is, to confess and to communicate once in a fortnight. We have been obliged to appoint particular days on which they shall confess, or they would not leave us leisure to discharge our own duties. These are the Fridays and Sundays of each week, when we hear them, and on these days we are overwhelmed with a crowd of penitents. The care which we take of the sick gains us their confidence, and it is particularly at such times that we reap the fruits of our labors. Their docility is then perfect, and we have generally the consolation of seeing them die in great peace, and with the firm hope of being shortly united to God in Heaven.

This Mission owes its establishment to the late Father Gravier. The Father Marquet was in truth the first who discovered the Mississippi about thirty nine years ago, but not being acquainted with the language of the country, he did not remain. Sometime afterwards he made a second journey, with the intention of fixing there his residence, and laboring for the conversion of these people, but death, which arrested him on the way, left to another the care of accomplishing this enterprise.* This was the Father

[* In 1673 the Mississippi was first discovered by Joliet and Marquette. They crossed Lake Michigan and were the first to enter Wisconsin.—"Here," says Marquette, "the guides returned, leaving us alone in this unknown land, in the hands of Providence." They embarked on the broad Wisconsin, and for seven days suffered their canoe to float down, until—to use his own words, "they entered happily the Great River, with a joy that could not be expressed." On their way down they visited the tribes on the western bank, and were the first white men that trod the soil of Iowa. Risking their lives every hour, they floated past the mouth of the Ohio, and at length left behind them the region of the prairies and entered the cane-

Daloës, who charged himself with it. He was acquainted with the language of the *Oumiamis*, which approaches very nearly to that of the Illinois. He however made but a short sojourn, having the idea while there, that he should be able to accomplish more in a different country, where indeed he ended his apostolic life.

Thus, the Father Gravier is the one who should properly be regarded as the founder of the mission to the Illinois. He first investigated the principles of their language, and reduced them to grammatical rules, so that we have since only been obliged to bring to perfection what he began with so great success. This Missionary had at first much to suffer from their medicine-men, and his life was exposed to continual dangers, but nothing repulsed him, and he surmounted all these obstacles by his patience and mildness. Being obliged to depart to *Michillimakinac*, his mission was confided to Father Bineteau and Father Pinet. In company with these two Missionaries I labored for some time, and

brakes of the south. After descending below the Arkansas, preaching everywhere that they could make themselves understood the mysteries of their faith, they again ascended to Green Bay. Joliet returned to Quebec to announce his discovery, and Marquette remained preaching to the Miamis in the north of Illinois.

The account of his death is thus given by Bancroft: "Two years afterwards, sailing from Chicago to Mackinaw, he entered a little river in Michigan. Erecting an altar, he said mass after the rites of the Catholic Church; then begging the men who conducted the canoe to leave him alone for half an hour,

'In the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication.'

"At the end of the half hour they went to seek him, and he was no more. The good missionary, discoverer of a world, had fallen asleep on the margin of the stream that bears his name. Near its mouth the canoemen dug his grave in the sand."—*Hist. of U. S.*, iii. 161.]

after their death remained in sole charge of all the [illegible]some duties of the mission, until the arrival of Father Mermet. My residence was formerly in the great village of the *Peouarias*, where Father Gravier, who had returned thither for the second time, received a wound which caused his death.

We have during this year lost but few of our people. I regret however most deeply the removal of one of our instructers, whose life and death have been most edifying. We here call those *instructers* who in other missions are called *catechists*, because it is not in the Church, but in the wigwams that they instruct the catechumens and the new proselytes. There are in the same way instructresses also for the women and the young girls. Henry, (for such was the name of the instructer of whom I am speaking,) although of a very degraded family, had rendered himself respectable to every one by his great piety. He did not reside in our village more than seven or eight years, and before he came there had never seen a Missionary, or received even the first idea of Christianity. His conversion had in it something very singular. He was attacked with the small-pox, both himself and all his family. This disease swept off at first his wife and several of his children, leaving the others blind or extremely deformed, while he himself was reduced to the borders of the grave. When he thought that he had only a few moments longer to live, he imagined that he saw the Missionaries, who restored him to life, open to him the gate of Heaven, and urged him to enter there. From that moment he began to grow better.

Scarcely was he in a condition to walk, when he came to find us at our village, and earnestly prayed us to teach him the truths of religion. In proportion as we instructed him, he taught his children what he had retained of our lessons, and all the family were in a short time prepared to receive baptism. One of these children, entirely blind as he was, charmed us by the deep feelings of piety which we discovered in him. During the painful ill-

ness which for a long time afflicted him, his prayers were unceasing, and he died after some years in great innocence. His father, Henry, in the same manner endured the most severe tests. A long and grievous illness had the effect of purifying his virtue, and prepared him for a death which has seemed to us precious in the sight of God.

It is only a short time since that I also conferred baptism on a young catechumen of seventeen years of age, who has much edified our Christians by her firmness and by her inviolable attachment to Christianity. The examples which she had at home were well calculated to lead her astray. The daughter of a father and mother who were both idolaters, she found in her own family the greatest obstacles to the virtues which she practiced. To try her still more, a young libertine took a fancy to marry her, and omitted nothing which could induce her to consent to the union, even to the promise that he would become a Christian. The father and mother of our catechumen, who had been gained over by the young man, treated her with the greatest inhumanity to shake her constancy. Her brother even went so far as to threaten that he would kill her, if she continued so obstinately to refuse her consent. But these menaces and this ill treatment produced no effect on her. All her comfort was in coming to the church, and she often said to me, "The death which they threaten does not at all terrify me, for I would willingly prefer it to the lot they propose to me. The young man whom they wish me to marry is a libertine, who has no thought of conversion. But even if these promises were given in sincerity, neither he nor any others should at all change the resolution which I have made. No, my father, I shall never have any other spouse than Jesus Christ."

The persecution which she continued to receive in her family, was carried so far, that she was at last obliged to conceal herself at the residence of one of her relations who had become a Chris-

tian. There she was tried by different evils, which were not able to diminish her fervor; and this is the more surprising as the least adversity is generally able to discourage these Indians. Having heard, some time afterwards, that her mother was in danger of losing her sight, by means of two cataracts which had formed over her eyes, this generous girl, forgetting the unworthy treatment she had received, immediately hastened to her assistance. Her tenderness and assiduous cares won the heart of her mother, and even gained her so far that she now accompanies her daughter to the church, where she seeks instruction, to prepare herself for the grace of baptism, for which she eagerly asks.

As our Indians live on scarcely anything else but the smoked meat of animals which they kill in the chase, there are particular seasons in the year when they all quit the village and disperse themselves through the forests to hunt the wild beasts. This is a critical time, when they have more need than ever of the presence of the missionary, who is obliged to accompany them in all their excursions.

There are particularly two great hunts; that of the summer, which scarcely lasts three weeks, and that which takes place during the winter, which lasts four or five months. Although the summer hunt is the shortest, it is nevertheless the most painful, and it was this which cost the late Father Bineteau his life. He followed the Indians during the most oppressive heats of the month of July. Sometimes he was in danger of being stifled in the midst of the tall grasses, and then suffered cruelly from thirst, not finding anywhere on the parched-up prairies, a single drop of water to relieve it. During the day he was drenched in perspiration, and at night was obliged to take his rest on the bare ground, exposed to the dews, to the injurious effects of the atmosphere, and to many other miseries of which I cannot give you the detail. These fatigues produced in him a violent illness, of which he expired in my arms.

During the winter the Indians divide themselves into different companies, to search out the places where they think the game will be most abundant. It is then that we feel the desire to be able to multiply ourselves, that we may not lose sight of them. The utmost that we can do, is to hasten in succession to the different encampments where we find them, to strengthen them in their faith, and to administer to them the sacraments. Our village is the only one in which it would be permitted to any Indians to remain behind during all these expeditions. Many raise poultry and hogs, after the example of the French who are established there, and these for the most part excuse themselves from going to the hunting grounds. The Father Mermet, with whom I have had the happiness to be associated for many years, remains at the village for their instruction, the delicacy of his constitution placing it entirely out of his power to sustain the fatigues inseparable from these long journeys. Nevertheless, in spite of his feeble health, I can say that he is the soul of this mission. It is his virtue, his mildness, his touching instructions, and the singular talent he has of winning the respect and friendship of the Indians, which have placed our mission in its present flourishing state. For myself, who am so constituted that I can run on the snow with the rapidity with which a paddle is worked in a canoe, and who have, thanks to God, the strength necessary to endure all these toils, I roam through the forests with the rest of our Indians, much the greater part of whom pass a part of the winter in the chase.

These expeditions, which it is necessary for us to make from time to time, sometimes to attend the Indians, and sometimes for other reasons important to the welfare of our Missions, are exceedingly painful. You can yourself judge of this by the details of some which I have made during the last few years, and which will give you an idea of the manner in which journeys are performed by us in this country. If our missions are not as

flourishing as others in the great number of conversions, they are at least precious and useful by the toils and fatigues which are inseparable from them.

About twenty-five leagues from hence is the village of the *Tamarouas*. It is a mission which at first had been committed to Father Periet, whose zeal and labors God had blessed to such a degree, that I have been myself witness that his church was not able to contain the multitude of Indians, who resorted thither in crowds. This father had for his successor M. Bergier, a priest of the Seminary of Foreign Missions. Having learned that he was dangerously ill, I immediately repaired thither to his relief. I remained for eight whole days with this worthy ecclesiastic. The care which I took of him, and the remedies which I gave, seemed by degrees to restore him; and this was so far the case, that thinking himself better, and knowing too how necessary was my presence at my mission, on account of the departure of the Indians, he urged me to return. Before I left him, by way of precaution, I gave him the holy sacrament, and he instructed me as to the affairs of his mission, recommending it to my care, in case that God should remove him. I charged the French who had care of the sick man, immediately to let us know if he should be in danger, and set out on the road to my mission.

As there are but twenty-five leagues from one village to the other, a person need sleep but one night abroad, provided he can travel well. The food which he takes on the road, consists of some ears of corn and some pieces of smoked beef, which he carries with him. When hungry, he kindles a fire near a stream, which furnishes him with something to drink, and roasts his corn and meat, after which he lies down near the fire, turning himself sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, accordingly as he feels the need of warmth.

When I arrived at our village, almost all the Indians were gone. They were scattered along the Mississippi, and I immedi-

ately resumed my journey to go and join them. Scarcely had I advanced six leagues, when I found three wigwams, in one of which was an old man very ill. I confessed him, gave him some remedies, and promised to come again to see him, judging that he had yet a number of days to live.

Five or six leagues farther on, I found a great number of wigwams, which made a kind of village, and therefore stopped there some days to perform my accustomed duties. In the absence of the missionary, they never by any means fail to assemble every day in one large wigwam, and there they have prayers, they recite the chapelet, and chant the hymns, sometimes until the night is far advanced: and especially during the winter, when the nights are long, they pass a greater part of it in singing the praises of God. We always take care to appoint some one of our neophytes, who is the most fervent and most respected, to preside over meetings of this kind.

I had now remained for some time with these dear neophytes, when they came to inform me, that at eighteen leagues farther off, in descending the Mississippi, there were some sick persons who had need of prompt succor. I therefore embarked at once in a *pyrogue*, that is, a kind of boat made of one large tree, hollowed out to the length of forty feet, and very massive. The greatest difficulty is to ascend the river, but happily we had in this case to descend, and as its rapidity here is equal to that of the Rhone, we accomplished the eighteen leagues in a single day.

The sick persons were not in as pressing danger as had been described to me, and I soon relieved them by my remedies. As they had there a church, and a large number of wigwams, I remained several days to animate the fervor of my neophytes by frequent instructions, and by a participation in the sacraments. Our Indians have such confidence in the missionary who rules them, that they discover to him with the most perfect openness of heart, everything which happens during his absence. Thus,

when any disorder has taken place, or any one has given occasion of scandal, the missionary having been informed of it, has it in his power to remedy the evil, and to prevent the unhappy consequences which otherwise might ensue.

I was obliged to separate myself from my neophytes sooner than I wished. The good old man whom I had left so sick, and the illness of M. Bergier, troubled me unceasingly, and rendered me very desirous to return to the village to learn the news. I accordingly again ascended the Mississippi, but the voyage was not accomplished without great fatigue. I had but one Indian with me, and his want of skill obliged me to row continually, or to labor in propelling our boat with the pole. At last, I arrived in sufficient time at the wigwam of this fervent Christian, who was dying. He confessed for the last time, and received the Holy Communion with the deepest feelings of piety, exhorting his son and all those who were about him, to live according to the rules of the Gospel, and to be steadfast even to their last breath in the faith which they had embraced.

As soon as I had arrived at our village, I wished to go and see M. Bergier, but those who were there opposed it, alleging as a reason that no one had been sent with any news, as they had promised should be done in case he grew worse, and therefore they had no reason to doubt but that his health was re-established. I yielded to this reasoning, but a few days afterwards had cause for deep regret that I had not followed out my first design. A young slave arrived about two hours after mid-day, to inform us of his death, and request us to come and perform the funeral rites. I set out the very same hour. I had made about six leagues, when night overtook me, and a heavy rain which followed prevented me from taking some hours repose as I had intended. I therefore walked on till the dawn of day, when the weather having somewhat cleared up, I lighted a fire to dry myself, and then continued my route. I arrived in the evening at the village,

God having given me strength to accomplish these twenty-five leagues in one day and one night. Early in the morning of the next day I said mass for the deceased, and committed him to the earth.

The death of M. Bergier was almost unexpected, according to the report made to me by the French who were with him. He himself perceived its sudden approach, and said that it would be useless to send for me, as he should be dead before my arrival. He only took the crucifix in his hands, which he affectionately kissed, and then expired. He was a Missionary of true merit, and a most austere life. At the beginning of his Mission, he had to sustain rude assaults on the part of the medicine-men, who taking advantage of the little knowledge he had of the language of these Indians, were able every day to entice from him some of the Christian converts, but at length he in his turn knew how to render himself feared by these impostors. His death was to them an occasion of triumph. They assembled around the cross which he had erected, and there invoked their *Manitou*, dancing, and each one assuming to himself the glory of having killed the Missionary; after which they broke the cross into a thousand pieces. This is the information which some time afterwards I received with grief.

I thought that such an outrage should not pass with impunity, and for this reason prayed the French not to conclude any treaty with them, until they had made reparation for the insult which they had offered to our religion. This punishment had all the effect which I desired. The principal men of the village came twice, one after the other, to testify to me the sincere regret they felt for their fault, and they engaged me by this confession to go from time to time to see them. But we must acknowledge, that a Missionary can produce little effect on the Indians, except he lives with them, and continually watches their conduct.

Without this, they soon forget the instructions he has given them, and little by little return to their old disorders.

It is this knowledge we have of the inconstancy of the Indians, which in the course of time gave us so much uneasiness with regard to the state of our Mission among the *Peouarias*. The distance of our own village, the largest there was in this quarter, prevented us from making frequent excursions thither. And besides this, the bad treatment they had given to the late Father Gravier, had obliged the Governors of Canada and of Mobile to forbid the French making a treaty with them. Many Christians indeed of that village had come to reside near us, but there were still many others remaining there, who not being sustained by the regular instructions, would become unsteady in the faith.

At last, at the time we were thinking of measures to re-establish this Mission, we learned from some French who had made a treaty there secretly, that these Indians were very much humbled by the destitution in which they had been left—that in many engagements they had been beaten by their enemies, for the want of powder which the French had ceased to furnish them—that they appeared deeply touched at the unworthy manner in which they had treated the Father Gravier, and that they now most earnestly asked for a Missionary.

This news decided Father Mermet, Father de Ville and myself, that we should avail ourselves of the favorable disposition in which the *Peouarias* then were, to re-establish our Mission on its old footing. And Providence opened a way which was perfectly natural. It became necessary for one of us to make a journey to *Michillimakinac*, that is, to a distance of more than three hundred leagues from hence, to confer with Father Joseph Marest, my brother, on the affairs of our Missions, of which he is the Superior. In making this journey we could not avoid passing by the village of the *Peouarias*, and there was reason to hope that the presence of a Missionary would determine them to renew the re-

quest they had lately made, and the proofs of repentance they had given.

As I was perfectly well acquainted with these Indians, Father Marmet and Father de Ville charged me with the enterprise. I departed therefore on the Friday of Passion Week in the year 1711. One day was all the time I had to prepare for so long a journey, because I was hurried by two *Peouarias*, who wished to return thither, and by whom it was convenient for me to be accompanied. Some other Indians went with us as far as the village of the *Tamarouas*, where I arrived the second day after my departure. I set out again the next day, having nothing with me but my crucifix and breviary, and being accompanied only by the three Indians. Two of these Indians were not Christians, and the third was as yet only a catechumen.

I confess to you, my Reverend Father, that I was a little embarrassed when I saw myself at the mercy of these three savages, on whom I was scarcely able to depend. I represented to myself on the one hand, the fickleness of these people, that the first fancy would perhaps induce them to abandon me, or the fear of a hostile party would put them to flight at the least alarm. On the other hand, the horror of our forests, those vast uninhabited regions, where I should certainly perish if I was abandoned, presented itself to my mind, and almost took away all courage. But at last, reassuring myself by the testimony of my conscience, which told me within that I was only seeking God and his glory, I surrendered myself entirely to Providence.

Journeys which are made in this country should not be compared with those in Europe. There you find from time to time villages and towns, and houses in which you can rest, bridges or boats to cross the rivers, beaten paths which lead to your destination, and persons who can place you in the right way, if you have strayed. Here there is nothing of

the kind, and we travelled for twelve days without meeting a single soul. At one time we found ourselves on prairies which were boundless to our view, cut up by brooks and rivers, but without discovering any path which could guide us, and then again it became necessary to open a passage through dense forests, in the midst of brushwood covered with thorns and briars, and at other times we had to cross marshes filled with mire, in which we sometimes sank to the waist.

After having been excessively fatigued during the day, we were obliged to take our repose at night on the grass or on some branches, exposed to the wind, to the rain, and to the injurious effects of the atmosphere. We were happy indeed if we found ourselves near some stream, but if not, no matter how dry we were, the night passed without our being able to alleviate our thirst. We kindled a fire, and when we had killed any game on our way, we roasted pieces of it, which we eat with some ears of Indian corn, if we had any of them.

Besides these inconveniences, common to all those who travel through these deserted lands, we had the addition also of hunger during the whole of our journey. It was not because we did not see great numbers of stags, and deer, and particularly of buffaloes, but our Indians were not able to kill any. A rumor they had heard the day before our departure that the country was infested by parties of the enemy, prevented them from carrying their guns, for fear of being discovered by the report when they fired, or of being embarrassed, if it should be necessary for them to seek safety in flight. Thus, they could use nothing but their arrows, and the buffaloes which they hit, fled, carrying with them the arrows by which they had been pierced, and went to die in some distant place.

In all other things these poor people took great care of me. They carried me on their shoulders when it was necessary to cross any stream, and when we came to deep rivers, they collected

many pieces of dry wood which they tied together, and making me seat myself on this kind of boat, they transported themselves by swimming, and pushed me before them to the other side.

It was not without reason that they feared meeting with any war party of the enemy, for they would have received no quarter from them. Either their heads would have been cut off, or at best they would have been made prisoners, to be burnt at last before a slow fire, or to be used for food in their feasts. Nothing can be more frightful than these wars of our Indians. They are commonly found in parties of twenty, or thirty, or forty men. Sometimes these parties consist of only six or seven persons, and in this case they are the most formidable. As they make all their skill to consist in surprising the enemy, the small number increases the ease with which they conceal themselves, to render more certain the blow which they meditate. For our warriors do not pride themselves on attacking an enemy in front, and when he is on his guard. To attempt this it is necessary that they should be ten to one; and when such occasions do happen, each one excuses himself from advancing first. Their method is to follow on the trail of their enemies, and to kill each one when he is sleeping, or what is better, to place themselves in ambush in the neighborhood of the villages, to cut off the head of the first who comes out, and to carry off his scalp to make of it a trophy among his countrymen. It is thus that this thing is done.

As soon as one of these braves has killed his enemy, he draws his knife, and cuts round the head, taking off the skin with the hair, which he carries in triumph to his village. There for some days he suspends this scalp in the top of his wigwam, and all who are in the village come to congratulate him on his valor, and to bring him some presents to testify the interest they feel in his victory. At times they content themselves with making prisoners, but immediately tie their hands, and force them to run

before them at full speed, for fear they may be pursued, as sometimes happens, by the companions of those they are carrying off. The fate of these prisoners is very sad, for often they burn them at a slow fire, and, at other times, cook them in their kettles to make a feast for all their warriors.

During the first day of our departure we found some traces of a party of these warriors. I could not but admire the sharp-sightedness of our Indians. They showed me their tracks on the grass, distinguished where they had set down, where they had walked, and what was their number. As for myself, after narrowly scrutinizing the place, I was unable to detect the slightest trace. It was a happy circumstance for me that a panic did not seize them at this moment, as they would have left me entirely alone in the midst of the woods. But a little while afterwards, I myself, without intending it, gave them a terrible fright. A swelling which I had in the feet made me walk slowly, and they had got a very little in advance of me, without my having paid any attention to it. I suddenly perceived that I was alone, and you may judge how great was my embarrassment. I immediately began to call them, but they did not make me any answer; I accordingly shouted louder, and they, not doubting but that I had fallen in with a party of warriors, freed themselves at once from their packets that they might be enabled to run more easily. I redoubled my cries, and their fear augmented more and more. The two Indians who were idolaters now began to take to flight, but the catechumen, being ashamed to abandon me, drew a little nearer to see what was the matter. When he had perceived that there was nothing to fear, he made a sign to his comrades: then, approaching me, he said in a trembling voice, "You have given us a great fright: my companions have already fled, but as for me, I was resolved to die with you, rather than abandon you." This incident taught me to keep close to my

companions on the journey, and they, on their part, were more attentive not to separate themselves far from me.

Nevertheless, the difficulty which I had in my feet constantly increased. At the beginning of the journey I had made some blisters which I neglected, persuading myself that by dint of walking I should harden myself to the fatigue. As the fear of meeting with parties of the enemy made us take long journeys, and we passed the night in the midst of brushwood and thickets, so that no foe could approach us without making himself heard; as at other times we did not dare to light a fire for fear of being discovered, the fatigues we were obliged to undergo reduced me to a sad state. I could not walk except upon these sores, which so touched the Indians who accompanied me, that they formed the resolution of carrying me by turns. This service they rendered me during the two following days, but having reached the Illinois river, and not being more than twenty-five leagues from the *Peouarias*, I engaged one of my Indians to go on before, to give notice to the French of my arrival, and of the grievous situation in which I found myself. I endeavored to advance a little during two days, dragging myself along as I best could, and being carried from time to time by the two Indians who had remained with me.

On the third day, I saw a number of the French arrive at noon, who brought me a canoe and some refreshments. They were astonished to see how much I was drooping: it was the effect of the long abstinence we had undergone, and of the pain I had felt in walking. They embarked me in their canoe, and as I had not the least inconvenience to suffer, the repose and good treatment I enjoyed, very soon reëstablished me. It was, however, more than ten days before I was able to bear my weight upon my feet.

On the other hand I was much comforted by the steps which the *Peouarias* took. All the chiefs of the village came to salute

me, giving evidence of the joy they had at seeing me, and conjuring me to forget their past faults, and to come and live with them. I answered these marks of friendship by reciprocal testimonies of good will, and promised them to fix my residence in their midst, as soon as I had finished the business which called me to *Michillimakinac*.

After having remained fifteen days in the village of the *Peouarias*, and being a little restored by the care which they had taken of me, I thought of continuing my route. I had hoped that the French, who returned thither about that time, would carry me with them even to the end of my journey; but as the rain had not yet fallen, it was impossible for them to go by the way of the river. I therefore determined to cross to the river Saint Joseph, in the mission of the *Pouteautamis*, which is under the direction of Father Chardon. In nine days time I accomplished this second journey, a distance of seventy leagues, making it partly on the river, which is full of currents, and partly in crossing by land. God preserved me in a most wonderful manner on this journey. A party of warriors hostile to the Illinois, came to make a descent upon some hunters within gunshot of the path on which I was. They killed one of them, and carried off another to their village, that they might cook him in their kettles, and make of him a war-feast.

As I approached the village of the *Pouteautamis*, the Lord vouchsafed to recompense me for all my pains, by one of those unexpected adventures, which He sometimes arranges for the consolation of His servants. The Indians, who where sowing their fields, having perceived me from a distance, hastened to give notice of my arrival to Father Chardon. He met me suddenly, followed by another Jesuit. What an agreeable surprise, when in him I recognized my brother, who threw himself on my neck to embrace me! Fifteen years had passed since we had separated, without the hope of ever seeing each other again. It

is true that I was on my way to join him, but *Michillimakinac* was the place where our meeting should have been, and not a place more than a hundred leagues on this side of it. Without doubt, God had inspired him with the design of making at this time his visit to the Mission of Saint Joseph, to enable me in one moment to forget all my past fatigues. We both blessed the divine mercy, which induced us to come from places so remote, to afford us a consolation which we felt more than we could express. Father Chardon participated in the joy of this happy meeting, and showed us all those kind attentions which we could expect from his good will.

After having remained eight days at the Mission of Saint Joseph, I embarked with my brother in his canoe, to repair together to *Michillimakinac*. The voyage was very delightful to me, not only because I had the pleasure of being with a brother who is very dear, but also because it afforded me an opportunity of profiting for a much longer time by his conversation and example.

It is, as I have said, more than a hundred leagues from the Mission of St. Joseph to *Michillimakinac*. We go the whole length of Lake *Michigan*, which on the maps has the name, without any authority, of *the Lake of the Illinois*, since the Illinois do not at all dwell in its neighborhood. The stormy weather delayed us, so that our voyage took seventeen days, though it is often accomplished in less than eight.

Michillimakinac is situated between two great lakes, into which other lakes and many rivers empty. Therefore it is that this village is the ordinary resort of the French, the Indians, and almost all those engaged in the fur trade of the country. The soil there is far inferior to that among the Illinois. During the greater part of the year one sees nothing but fish, and the waters which are so agreeable during the summer, render a residence there dull and wearisome during the winter. The earth is

entirely covered with snow from All-Saints day* even to the month of May.

The character of these Indians partakes of that of the climate under which they live. It is harsh and indocile. Religion among them does not take deep root as should be desired, and there are but few souls who from time to time give themselves truly to God, and console the missionary for all his pains. For myself, I could not but admire the patience with which my brother endured their failings, his sweetness under the trial of their caprices and their coarseness, his diligence in visiting them, in teaching them, in arousing them from their indolence for the exercises of religion, his zeal and his love, capable of embracing their hearts, if they had been less hard and more tractable; and I said to myself, that success is not always the recompence of the toils of apostolic men, nor the measure of their merit.

Having finished all our business during the two months that I remained with my brother, it became necessary for us to separate. As it was God who ordered this separation, He knew how to soften all its bitterness. I departed to rejoin Father Chardon, with whom I remained fifteen days. He is a missionary full of zeal, and who has a rare talent for acquiring languages. He is acquainted with almost all those of the Indians who are on these lakes, and has even learned that of the Illinois sufficiently to make himself understood, although he has only seen some of those Indians accidentally, when they came to his village; for the *Pouteautamis* and the Illinois live in terms of friendship and visit each other from time to time. Their manners however are very different; those are brutal and gross, while these on the contrary are mild and affable.

After having taken leave of the missionary, we ascended the River Saint-Joseph to where it was necessary to make a portage about thirty leagues from its mouth. The canoes which are used

[* November 1st.]

for navigation in this country are only of bark and very light, although they carry as much as a large boat. When the canoe has carried us for a long time on the water, we in our turn carry it on the land to cross over to another river, and it was thus that we did in this place. We first transported all there was in the canoe towards the source of the river of the Illinois, which they call *Haukiki*, then we carried thither our canoe, and after having launched it, we embarked there to continue our route. We were but two days in making this portage which is a league and a half in length. The abundant rains which had fallen during this season had swelled our little rivers, and freed us from the currents which we feared. At last we perceived our own agreeable country, the savage buffaloes and herds of stags wandering on the borders of the river, and those who were in the canoe took some of them from time to time which served for our food.

At the distance of some leagues from the village of the *Peouarias*, many of these Indians came to meet me, to form an escort to defend me from hostile parties of warriors who might be roaming through the forest, and when I approached the village, they sent forward one of their number to give notice of my arrival. The greater part ascended to the fort, which is situated on a rock on the banks of the river, and when I entered the village made a general discharge of their guns in sign of rejoicing. Their joy was indeed pictured plainly on their countenances, and shone forth in my presence. I was invited with the French and the Illinois chiefs to a feast which was given to us by the most distinguished of the *Peouarias*. It was there that one of the principal chiefs addressed me in the name of the nation, testifying to me the vivid grief they felt at the unworthy manner in which they had treated Father Gravier, and conjured me to forget it, to have pity on them and their children, and to open to them the gate of Heaven which they had closed against themselves.

For myself, I returned thanks to God from the bottom of my

heart, that I thus saw that accomplished which I had desired with the utmost ardor: I answered them in a few words, that I was touched with their repentance, that I always regarded them as my children, and that after having made a short excursion to my mission, I should come to fix my residence in the midst of them, to aid them by my instructions to return into the way of salvation, from which they had perhaps wandered. At these words the chief uttered a loud cry of joy, and each one with emulation testified his gratitude. During two days that I remained in the village, I said Mass in public, and discharged all the duties of a missionary.

It was towards the end of August that I embarked to return to my mission of the *Cascaskias*, distant a hundred and fifty leagues from the village of the *Peouarias*. During the first day of our departure, we found a canoe of the *Scioux*, broken in some places, which had drifted away, and we saw an encampment of their warriors, where we judged by the view there were at least one hundred persons. We were justly alarmed, and on the point of returning to the village we had left, from which we were as yet but ten leagues distance.

These *Scioux* are the most cruel of all the Indians, and we should have been lost if we had fallen into their hands. They are great warriors, but it is principally upon the water that they are formidable. They have only small canoes of bark made in the form of a gondola, and scarcely larger than the body of a man, for they cannot hold more than two or three at the most. They row on their knees, managing the oar now on one side and now on the other, that is, giving three or four strokes of the oar on the right side, and then as many on the left side, but with so much dexterity and swiftness, that their canoes seem to fly on the water. After having examined all things with attention, we concluded that these Indians had struck their intended blow and were retiring: we however kept on our guard, and advanced with

great caution, that we might not encounter them. But when we had once gained the Mississippi, we went on by dint of rowing. At last, on the 10th of September, I arrived at my dear mission in perfect health, after five months' absence.

I will not tell you of the joy which all felt at seeing us; you can yourself well imagine that it was great on both sides. But when the question came to be settled with regard to keeping the promise I had given the *Peouarias*, to go and live with them, the French and the Indians there opposed it, probably because they were accustomed to my ways, and were not pleased with the idea of a change. Father de Ville was therefore sent thither in my place. This Father, who had been but a short time with us, now makes it evident by his zeal, by the talent he has for winning the Indians, and by the progress he makes among them, that God had destined him to that mission, of which he did not think me worthy.

When I was returned to my mission, I blessed God for the favor with which he had loaded it during my absence. There had been that year an abundant harvest of wheat and Indian corn. Besides the beauty of the place, we have also salt springs in the neighborhood, which are of great use to us. Some cows have just been brought to us, which will render us the same services by their labor, that oxen render in France. The attempt has been made to tame the wild buffaloes, but always without success. Mines of lead and of tin are not far from hence, and would perhaps be found to be extensive, as I said above. if some intelligent person should employ himself in exploring them. We are but thirty leagues distance from the *Missouri* or *Pekitanoui*. This is a large river which empties into the Mississippi, and they assert that it is of even greater length than that river. It is at the source of this river that the best mines of the Spaniards are situated. We are also very near the river *Ouabache*, which likewise empties itself below us into the Mississippi. By means

of this river one could easily trade with the *Miamis*, and with a great number of other nations much more distant, for it extends even to the country of the Iroquois.

All these advantages exceedingly favor the design which some Frenchmen have formed of establishing themselves in our village. To inform you whether establishments of this kind will contribute to the advantage of our religion, is a point which it would not be easy for me to settle. Should the French who come among us resemble those whom I have seen in other places, who edify our neophytes by their piety and by the regularity of their lives, nothing would be more comforting to us, or more useful to the progress of the Gospel. But if unhappily any of them should make a profession of licentiousness, or perhaps of irreligion, as it is to be feared, might take place in our mission, their pernicious example would make a deeper impression on the minds of the Indians than all that we could say to preserve them from the same disorders. They would not fail to reproach us, as they have already done in some places, that we take advantage of the facility with which they believe us, that the laws of Christianity are not as severe as we represent them to be, since it is not to be credited that persons as enlightened as the French, and brought up in the bosom of religion, would be willing to rush to their own destruction, and precipitate themselves into hell, if it were true that such and such an action merited a punishment so terrible. All the reasoning which the missionary could oppose to this impression produced by evil example, would have no influence over the minds of a people, who are scarcely touched except by what strikes the senses. Therefore, my Reverend Father, aid me to pray the Lord that He will render my apprehensions unfounded, and that He will continue to pour out His blessings on my feeble labors. I commend myself to your holy prayers, and am with respect, &c.

P. Gabriel Marest, Missionary.

[The fears of Father Marest with regard to the Mission were fully realized. The French who settled there soon degenerated, and gradually assimilated their manners to those of the Indians among whom they lived, while the evil of their example was of course felt by the Christian Indians, until it became at last ruinous to the Mission.]

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VOYAGE UP THE MISSISSIPPI.

1727.

LETTER VIII.

FROM FATHER DU POISSON, MISSIONARY TO THE AKENSAS, TO FATHER * * * .

HAVE you no desire, my dear Friend, to receive some information with regard to the world, which, while it has the least possible claim to be considered as curious, yet costs the most to acquire by experience? I refer to the manner of a voyage on the Mississippi—the character of this country, so extolled, and also so decried at this time in France—and the nature of the people who are to be found here. There is nothing else indeed about which I can write you at present; if, therefore, the relation I am going to give of our voyage is not interesting, you must ascribe it to the country; if it should prove too long, you must refer it to the great desire I feel of keeping up my intercourse with you.

During our stay at New Orleans, we had seen peace and good order re-established through the care and wisdom of the new Commander-General. There were two parties among those at the head of affairs. They called the one, the Great Company, and the other the Little Company. These divisions are now broken up, and there is every reason to hope that the Colony will be re-established on a more solid foundation than ever. But whatever might happen, we expected each day the arrival of the *Gironde*, on board of which were Fathers Tartarin, Doutreleau, one of our brethren, and some nuns. This it was which induced us to hasten our departure, that we might spare the Reverend Father de Beaubois an increase of embarrassment, although this

was a bad season for a voyage up the Mississippi. Besides, this Father had on his hands brother Simon, who with some boatmen had descended from the Illinois country, and had been waiting for us for four or five months. Simon is a proselyte of the mission among the Illinois, and the boatmen here are persons who are engaged to row in the pirogue or boat, and we may also add, to try the patience of those whom they conduct.*

We embarked then on the 25th of May, 1727, the Fathers Souel and Dumas with myself, under the direction of the good man Simon. The Fathers de Guienne and le Petit, being obliged in a few days to take a different route; the former, as you know, to the *Alibamons*, and the latter to the *Chasses*. Our baggage and that of our boatmen occupied a space, which filled up our two boats to more than a foot above the sides. We were perched up on a heap of chests and packages, without being able even to change our position, and it had already been prophesied to us that we could not go far with this equipage. In ascending the Mississippi we coast along by the shore in consequence of the force of the current. We had scarcely lost sight of New Orleans, when a projecting branch which had not been noticed by our helmsman, caught in a chest, overturned it, caused it to make a somerset upon a young man who was near, and rudely struck Father Souel. Fortunately it broke in this first effort, or both the chest and the young man would have been in the river. This accident decided us, when we arrived at Chapitulas, about three leagues distance from New Orleans, to despatch some one to Father de Beaubois, to ask him for a much larger boat.

During all this time we were among old acquaintances. The

[* Throughout this letter Father du Poisson seems fond of a play upon words, the point of which it is impossible to convey in a translation. We give, therefore, the French:—"On appelle ici *engagés* des gens qui se louent pour ramer . . . . . et l'on pourroit ajouter, pour faire *enrager* ceux qu'ils conduisent."]

barbarous name which the country bears, shows that it has been in other times inhabited by savages, and at present they apply this title to five grants which are along the Mississippi. M. Dubreuil, a Parisian, received us into his. The next three belong to three Canadian brothers, who came into the country to settle, with nothing but the clothes on their back and the stick in their hand, but who have more advanced their fortunes than the grantees in France, who have sent out millions to establish their grants, which at the present time are for the most part ruined.* The fifth belongs to M. de Koli, a Swiss by birth, Seigneur of the Manor of Livry, near Paris, one of the most honorable men that can be found. He had come over in the same ship with us, to see for himself the condition of his grant, for which he had fitted out ships, and subjected himself to endless expenses. There are in each of these grants at least sixty negroes, who cultivate Indian corn, rice, indigo, and tobacco. These are the parts of the colony which are most flourishing. I now am speaking to you of a grant; I shall also have occasion presently to speak of a plantation and a settlement. You perhaps do not know what all these are; have patience then to read the explanation.

They call a *Grant* a certain extent of territory *granted* by the India Company to one person alone, or to many who have formed together a partnership to clear the lands and make them valuable. These were the persons, who in the days of the great Mississippi bubble† were called the Counts and the Marquises of

[* Another play upon words, which he has marked in Italics, that it may not escape the reader—"Qui ont envoyé des millions pour *fonder* leurs concessions qui sont *fondues* à présent pour la plupart."]

[† This allusion was well understood in 1727. It refers to the Mississippi scheme of Law, the celebrated financial adventurer, who, in 1716, established his bank in Paris under the patronage of the Duke of Orleans. It had annexed to it a Mississippi Company, which had grants of land in Louisiana, and was expected to realize immense sums by planting and commerce. In 1718 it was declared a Royal Bank, and such was the extent of its business

Mississippi. Thus the grantees are the aristocracy of this country. The greater part have never left France, but have equipped ships filled with directors, stewards, storekeepers, clerks, workmen of different trades, provisions and goods of all kinds. Their business was, to penetrate into the woods, to build their cabins there, to make choice of lands, and to burn the canes and trees. These beginnings seemed too hard to people not accustomed to such kind of labor; the directors and their subalterns for the most part amused themselves in places where there were some French already settled; there they consumed their provisions, and the work was scarcely commenced before the grant was entirely ruined. The workman badly paid, or badly fed, refused to labor, or else seized on his own pay, and the stores were plundered. Was not all this perfectly French? But this was in part the obstacle which has prevented the country from being settled, as it should have been, after the prodigious expense which has been lavished upon it.

They call a Plantation a smaller portion of land granted by the company. A man with his wife, or his associate, clears a small section, builds him a house with four forked sticks, which he covers with bark, plants some corn and rice for his food; another year

and funds, that the shares rose to twenty times their original value. All France was seized with a rage for gambling, and happy were they who could acquire this imaginary wealth by entirely stripping themselves of all their real property. In 1720 Law was made Comptroller-General of the finances, and regarded as the Plutus of France, saw clients of all ranks at his levee, which rendered him proud and insolent in proportion. At length the baseless fabric of this prosperity began to give way, and the shares sunk in value as rapidly as they had risen. Law was obliged to resign his post, after having held it only five months, and for personal safety leave the kingdom. He took with him but a remnant of his once immense fortune, and died in obscurity at Venice in 1729. *Gorton's Biog. Dict.* The history of Law's own grant in Louisiana will be found in the next letter of this volume.]

he raises more provisions, and begins a plantation of tobacco, and if finally he attains to the possession of three or four negroes, behold the extent to which he can reach. This is what they call *a plantation* and *a planter*. But how many are as wretched as when they commenced?

They call a Settlement, a section in which there are many plantations not far distant from each other, forming a kind of village.

Besides these grantees and planters, there are also in this country, people who have no other business than that of vagabondizing. 1st, Women and girls taken from the hospitals of Paris, from Salpêtriere, or from other places of equally good reputation, who find the laws of marriage too strict, and the care of a single household too troublesome. Voyages of four hundred leagues present nothing to terrify these heroines; I have met with two of them, whose adventures would furnish materials for a romance. 2d, The voyagers; these are for the most part young people sent for some reason to Mississippi by their parents or by justice, and who, finding it too low to dig the earth, prefer engaging themselves as rowers, and wandering about from one shore to the other. 3d, The hunters; these at the end of the summer ascend the Mississippi to the distance of two or three hundred leagues to the buffalo country; they dry in the sun the flesh on the ribs of the buffaloes, salt the rest, and also make bear's oil. Towards spring they descend, and thus furnish provisions to the Colony. The country which extends from New Orleans even to this place, renders this business necessary, because it is not sufficiently inhabited, or enough cleared to raise cattle there. At the distance of only thirty leagues from here they begin to find the buffaloes, and they are in herds on the prairies or by the rivers. During the past year a Canadian came down to New Orleans with four hundred and eighty tongues of buffaloes he

had killed during his winter campaign with the aid of only one associate.

We left the *Chapitoulas* on the 29th. Although we had sent for a much larger boat, and in spite of the new stowing which our people made, we were almost as much crowded as before. We had but two leagues to make that day, to reach *Burnt Canes*,* the residence of M. de Benac, director of the grant of M. d'Artagnan, where we were to sleep. He received us in a very friendly manner, and regaled us with a carp from the waters of the Mississippi, which weighed thirty-five pounds. The *Burnt Canes* is the name given to two or three grants along the Mississippi; the place is very much like the *Chapitoulas*, while the situation appears to me to be more beautiful.

The next day we advanced six leagues, which is about as much as they can ever accomplish in ascending the river, and we slept, or rather encamped at *the Germans*.† These are the quarters assigned to the lingering remnant of that company of Germans who had died of misery, some at the East, and some on arriving in Louisiana.‡ Great poverty is visible in their dwellings. It is here properly that we begin to learn what it is to voyage on the Mississippi, and I am going to give you a little idea of it, so that I shall not be obliged to repeat the same thing every day.

We had set out at the season of the heavy floods, when the river had risen more than forty feet above its ordinary level, and as almost all the country is composed of low lands, it was of course inundated. Thus we were exposed to the difficulty of not finding *cabanage*, that is to say, ground on which to do our cooking and to sleep. When we could find it we slept in this way. If the ground was still muddy, as was the case when the water

[* Cannes brûlées.] [† Aux Allemands.]

[‡ Some further account of these Germans is given in the next letter. They were a portion of the settlers brought out for Law's grant, but did not arrive until after his fall, when they were suffered to die from want.]

began to subside, they commenced by making a couch of branches, that the mattress might not rest on the mud. Then they spread upon the earth a skin, or a mattress, and clothes, if they had them. They bent three or four canes into a semicircle, both ends of which they fixed in the earth, and placed them at proper distances from each other, according to the length of the mattress; on these they fasten three others crosswise, and then spread over this slight framework the *baire*, that is, a large cloth, the ends of which they fold under the mattress with great care. It is under these tombs, where we are stifled with heat, that we are obliged to sleep. The first thing we do on reaching land, is to arrange our *baire* with all diligence, for otherwise the musquitoes do not permit us to use it. If one could sleep in the open air, he could enjoy the coolness of the night, and would be too happy.

There is much more cause of complaint when no *cabanage* can be found. Then they tie the boat to a tree. If they can find a raft of trees, they do their cooking on top of it, but if not, we go to sleep without supper, or rather we neither sup at all nor sleep at all, since we are resting in the same situation in which we were during the day, with the addition of being exposed through the whole night to the fury of the musquitoes. By the way, what is here called a raft is a collection of floating trees which the flood has uprooted: the current continually sweeping them down, they are finally arrested by some tree whose root is in the ground, or by a neck of land, and there accumulate one upon the other, and form enormous piles. We have found some which would furnish the whole of your good city of Tours with wood for three winters. These places are difficult and dangerous to pass. It is necessary to sail close to these rafts; the current there is rapid, and if it dashes the boat against the floating trees, it disappears at once, and is swallowed up in the waters under the raft.

It was also the season of the most excessive heats which increased each day. During the whole voyage we had but a single

entire day of cloudy weather, always the burning sun upon our heads, without being able even to use over our boats a small awning which might afford us a little shade. Besides, the height of the trees and the denseness of the woods, which through all the route, are on both banks of the river, did not permit us to feel the least breath of wind. Although the river is a half league in breadth, the breeze does not make itself felt except in the middle of the stream, and it is necessary to cross it, to catch the slightest breath of air. We drew up, without cessation, the water of the Mississippi through reeds, to quench our thirst, and although it is very turbid, we experienced no ill effect. Another refreshment we had, was from the grapes hanging almost everywhere from the trees, and we snatched them in passing, or gathered them when we landed. There are in this country, at least among the Akensas, two kinds of grapes, of which the one ripens in summer, and the other in autumn. They are of the same species; the grapes themselves are very small, and they afford a juice which is very thick. There is also another kind, the cluster of which has but three grapes, which are as large as the damask plum. Our Indians call them *asi, contai raisin, prune.*

Our stock of provisions consisted of biscuit, butter which was salt and very rancid, rice, corn, and peas. The biscuit gave out when we were a little above Natchez. Our butter was gone when we were only ten or twelve leagues distant from New Orleans; we therefore fed on the peas, and afterwards on the rice, which did not fail until our arrival at this place. The seasoning consisted of salt, bear's oil, and a particularly good appetite. The most ordinary food of this country, almost the only food of many persons, and above all of the voyagers, is the *gru.* They bruise the corn to remove the outer skin, boil it for a long time in water, the French sometimes seasoning it with oil, and this constitutes the *gru.* The Indians pound the corn very fine, cook it sometimes with fat, but oftener with water only, and this is

the *sagamite*. The *gru*, indeed, is used instead of bread; a spoonful of *gru* and a small piece of meat are taken together.

But the greatest torment, in comparison with which all the rest would be but sport, which passes all belief, and has never been even imagined in France, still less actually experienced, is that of the musquitoes—the cruel persecution of the musquitoes. The plague of Egypt, I think, was not more cruel—*Dimittam in te et in servos tuos et in populum tuum et in domos tuas omne genus muscarum et implebunter domus Ægyptiorum diversi generis et universa terra in qua fuerint.** They have here the *frape d'abord*, and also the *brulots*. The latter is a species of very small gnat, whose sting is so sharp, or rather so burning, that it seems as if a spark of fire had fallen on the spot. There are also the *mous tiques*, which are like the *brulots*, with the exception that they are much smaller, so that one can with difficulty see them; their attacks are particularly directed against the eyes. There are also the *guêpes*, and the *thons;* in one word, there are *omne genus muscarum.*†

But none of these others are worthy to be mentioned with the musquitoes. This little insect has caused more swearing since the French have been in Mississippi, than had previously taken place in all the rest of the world. Whatever else may happen, a swarm of these musquitoes embark in the morning with the voyager. When they pass among the willows or near the canes, as very often takes place, a new swarm fastens with fury on the boat, and never quits it. It is necessary to keep the handkerchief in continual exercise, and this scarcely frightens them. They make a short circuit, and return immediately to the attack.

[* Exodus viii. 28. I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are.]

[† Every kind of fly.]

The arms become weary much sooner than they do. When we land to take dinner, which is between ten o'clock and two or three, there is an entire army to be combatted. We make a *boucane*, that is, a great fire, which we stifle afterwards with green branches. But it is necessary for us to place ourselves in the very thickest of the smoke, if we wish to escape the persecution, and I do not know which is worse, the remedy or the evil. After dinner we wish to take a short nap at the foot of a tree, but that is absolutely impossible; the time allotted to repose is passed in contending with the musquitoes. We embark again in their company, and at sunset, on landing, it is necessary immediately to run to cut canes, wood, and green branches, to make the *baire*, the fire for cooking, and the *boucane*. There, it is each one for himself, but it is not one army, but many armies which we have to combat, for that time of day belongs to the musquitoes. One is perfectly eaten and devoured. They get into the mouth, the nostrils, and the ears; the face, the hands, the body are all covered; their sting penetrates the dress, and leaves a red mark on the flesh, which swells on those who are not as yet inured to their bite. Chicagon, to enable some of his nation to comprehend what a multitude of French he had seen, told them, that he had beheld "as many in the great village" (at Paris) "as there were boughs on the trees, *and musquitoes in the woods.*" After having supped in haste, we are impatient to bury ourselves under the *baire*, although we know that we go there to be stifled with the heat. With what address, with what skill does each one glide under his *baire!* But they always find that some have entered with them, and one or two are sufficient to insure a miserable night.

Such are the inconveniences of a voyage on the Mississippi. And yet how many voyagers endure them all for the prospect of a gain even the most moderate! There was in a boat which ascended at the same time with our own, one of those heroines of

whom I have already spoken, who was going to rejoin her hero. She did nothing but chatter, laugh, and sing. And if for a little temporal benefit, if even for crime itself, one can endure a voyage like this, should men fear it who are appointed to labor for the salvation of souls!

I return to my journal. On the 31st, we made seven leagues. In the evening, no cabanage. Water and biscuit for supper—slept in the boat—devoured by the musquitoes through the night. *Note.*—This was the Vigil of Whitsunday, a fast-day.

The 1st of June we arrived at Oumas, a French plantation, where we found enough ground not overflowed to erect our cabins. We remained there during the next day to give rest to our crew. In the evening, Father Dumas and I embarked in a boat which during the night was to go the same distance we should otherwise have to accomplish on the next day. By this means we avoided the intense heat.

On the 3rd we arrived, early in the morning indeed, at *Bayagoulas* (the destroyed nation), at the house of M. du Buisson, director of the grant of the Messieurs Paris. Here we found some beds, which we had almost forgotten how to use, and during the morning took that repose which the musquitoes had not permitted us to gain during the night. M. du Buisson omitted nothing which could add to our comfort, and regaled us with a wild turkey. (This is in every respect like the domestic turkey, except that the taste is finer.) The grant appeared to us well arranged and in a good condition. It would have been worth still more if it had always had as good a director. Our people arrived in the evening, and the next day we left the *Bayagoulas*, charmed with the pleasant manners and civilities of M. du Buisson.

Framboise, Chief of the *Sitimachas*, who had been a slave to M. de Bienville, had come hither to see us, and had invited us to dine at his home, which we should have to pass about noon. He had before given the same invitation when he descended with his

tribe to New Orleans to chant the calumet before the new Governor. This gave occasion to an adventure, which we were glad to get through with, and the recital of which you will perhaps be equally glad to get through reading; but *n'importe*, I will give it you.

The inundation had obliged the *Sitimachas* to penetrate deeply into the wood, and we therefore fired off a gun to announce our arrival. The sound of a gun in the woods of Mississippi is like a clap of thunder, and immediately afterwards a little Indian presented himself before us. We had a young man with us who was acquainted with the language; he therefore questioned him, and told us in reply, that the little Indian was sent to conduct us, and that the village was not far distant. It is necessary to observe, in passing, that this young man had an excellent appetite, and that he was well aware we should not be able to do any cooking where we then were, on account of the water. Trusting to his word we set out in an Indian boat which happened to be there, the child guiding us. We had not gone far when the water for our boat failed, and there was scarcely anything but mud. Our people, who assured us that it was only a step, pushed on the boat by main strength, encouraged by the hope of their anticipated feast with Framboise, but at last we came to nothing but prostrate trees, mud, and deep holes filled with stagnant water. The little Indian here left us and disappeared in a moment. What were we to do in these woods without a guide? Father Souel sprang into the water, and we followed him. It was certainly pleasant to see us floundering among the rocks and brambles, and in the water up to our knees. Our greatest difficulty was to withdraw our shoes from the mud. At last, well bemired and quite exhausted, we arrived at the settlement, which was distant from the river more than half a league. Framboise was surprised at our arrival, and coldly remarked, that he had nothing. In this incident we recognized the traits of an Indian.

Our interpreter had deceived us, for Framboise had not sent to find us; he had not expected us, and had thought that he risked nothing by inviting us, being persuaded that the inundation would prevent our getting to his residence. Whatever might happen, we were obliged to sound a speedy retreat and without a guide. After wandering a little, we found again the Indian boat, stowed ourselves within it, and regained our own people as we best could. Those who had remained amused themselves with our appearance and our adventure; and never did we have so much laughter, or rather it is the only time that we had any thing to laugh about. As I said before, there was no ground on which to do our cooking, and it was necessary to content ourselves with a piece of biscuit. In the evening we arrived at a spot above the *Manchat*, a branch of the Mississippi which empties into the Lake *Maurepas;* no ground for cooking—no cabanage—millions of musquitoes during the night. *Second note.* This was a fast-day; the waters began to fall, which gave us reason to hope that we should not be obliged to sleep much more in the boat.

The *Sitimachas* dwelt at the lower end of the river in the early days of the colony, but having at that time killed M. de Saint-Côme, a Missionary, M. de Bienville, who commanded for the king, revenged his death. The map of Mississippi incorrectly places the nation of the Sitimachas, which is not the only fault we find there. After this little criticism on Mississippian erudition, I return to our voyage.

On the 4th we slept at *Baton-Rouge.* This place receives its name from a tree painted red by the Indians, and which serves as a boundary for the hunting grounds of the nations who are above and below. We saw there the remains of a French plantation, abandoned on account of the deer, the rabbits, the wild-cats, and the bears, which ravaged everything. Four of our people

went on a hunting expedition, and returned next day without any other game than an owl.

On the 7th we dined at the grant of M. Mezieres: it has the air of a plantation which is just commencing. We saw there one hovel, some negroes, and a single laborer, who did us neither good nor ill. We cabined for the night at *Point-Coupée*, before the house of a planter, who received us with great attention. The rain detained us there next morning, and permitted us during the whole day to make but a single league, as far as the residence of another planter. His house, which was constructed from four forked sticks, gave us, for better and for worse, a shelter from a frightful storm. How much need have these poor people of consolation, both spiritual and temporal!

On the 9th we had scarcely embarked when there came from the woods a most execrable odor. They told us that it proceeded from an animal close on shore, which they called *bête puante* and which spreads this disagreeable smell every where about it. We cabined for the night at the *Little Tonicas*, in the canes; during the winter they set them on fire, but during the summer it is necessary to cut them to be able to cabin there. The Indian village is up the country; from thence to the *Great Tonicas* it is ten or twelve leagues by the Mississippi; but by land there is nothing but a mere neck which separates the two villages. Formerly they made a portage, crossing the land. They still call this passage *the portage of the Cross*. The river had penetrated this point, and inundated it entirely during these great floods, and it was this place that we had to cross the next day, that is to say, a distance of two leagues, to avoid the ten leagues which it would be necessary to go if we continued our route by the Mississippi. We accordingly took an Indian at the *Little Tonicas* to act as our guide.

On the 10th we entered these woods, this sea, this torrent, for it is all these at once. Our guide, whose language none of us

understood, addressed us by signs; one interpreted these in one way, and another in a different way, so that we did every thing at hazard. However, when a person has entered these woods, it is necessary to go on or perish, for if he allows himself to get into the current for the purpose of returning, the rapid stream will certainly dash the boat against a tree, which will break it into a thousand pieces. If it had not been for that, we should have retired from such an evil undertaking immediately, as soon as we saw ourselves embarked in it. It was necessary unceasingly to turn about the boat in a zigzag course to prevent the bows from striking against the trees, and we often found it wedged between two trees which did not give it sufficient space to pass, contrary to the expectation of those who steered it. Now there was a torrent of which the entrance was almost closed by a raft or perhaps by two trees of great length and enormous thickness, prostrated across the two banks of the current, and which rendered it more impetuous; now, the entrance would be entirely barred by a single tree, and it was necessary to change our direction at the risk of finding the same obstacle a moment afterwards, or of not finding sufficient water, but instead of it, mud and brambles. Then, it became necessary to push on the boat by main strength. Often one of our people was obliged to spring into the water even to his neck, to go and make fast the boat to a tree which extended out, so that if the strength of the current should exceed that of the oars, and cause the boat to recede, it might not dash itself against a tree. Our own boat ran the greatest risk; it began to fill in a current which had forced it back, and we saw in a moment that it was going to sink. The strength of the oars saved us, and by good fortune there happened not to be at that place either raft or uprooted trees. After having passed another, which only left a space the size of the boat, it remained for a moment immoveable between the strength of the current and that of the oars; we did not know whether it

was going to advance or be driven back, that is to say, for a moment we were vibrating between life and death; for if the oars had yielded to the strength of the current, we should have gone back to be dashed against a large tree which almost entirely barred the current. Our people in the other boat, who had passed before us, waited in a sad and mournful silence, and uttered a loud cry of joy when they saw us out of danger. I should never end if I were to recount to you all the toils of this day. The passage is well named *the passage of the Cross*, and a voyager who knows what it is, and does not decline attempting it, even if he should escape its dangers, merits a place in a madhouse. And by this side-cut they abridge the voyage but a very short day's sail. The Lord saved our lives, and we at last reached the end and succeeded in accomplishing these two fatal leagues.

We arrived then at four or five in the evening at the *Great Tonicas*. The chief of this nation came to the bank of the river to receive us, grasped our hands, embraced us, spread out a mat and some skins before the cabin, and invited us to sleep there. Then he presented us with a large plate of blackberries, and a *manne* (that is, a basket) of green beans. It was truly a feast for us, for the *passage of the Cross* had not permitted us to stop for dinner.

This chief had been baptized, as well as several of his nation, by M. Davion, but after the return of this missionary to France, whither he had retired a short time after the arrival of the Capuchin Fathers in the country, he had scarcely retained any trace of Christianity about him, except the name, a medal, and a chaplet. He spoke a little French, and asked us the news of M. Davion. We answered, that he was dead, at which the chief testified his regret, and seemed to us to desire to have a missionary. He showed us also a medal of the king, which the Commander General had sent him in the name of his Majesty, with a writing which certified that it was in consideration of the attachment he

had always had for the French that this present was given him. There are some French at the *Tonicas*, who made great complaints to us with regard to their having no missionary. Father Dumas said Mass the next day, early in the morning, in the cabin of the chief, and we were edified by the eagerness shown by some of the French to profit by this opportunity of partaking of the sacraments.

On the 11th we passed the night for the last time in the boat. On the 12th we cabined at *Ecors blancs*, and on the 13th at *Natchez*. We immediately made our visit to the Reverend Father Philibert, a Capuchin, who is the Curé. He is a man of good sense, who was not frightened at seeing us, as his brethren had been at New Orleans; in other respects, he is a man of worth and very zealous. We afterwards descended to the bank of the river *to make there our baires.*

The French settlement at Natchez has become very important. They raise there a great deal of tobacco, which is esteemed the best in the country. It is a district which is very elevated, and from whence one can see the Mississippi winding along as in a chasm; about it is a continual succession of mounds and deep holes, but the ground of the grants is much more level and beautiful. The excessive heat prevented us from going thither or to the Indian village.

The village is distant one league from that of the French: it is the only nation, or almost the only one in which we see any kind of government and religion. They keep up a perpetual fire, and have received from tradition, that if it should happen to be extinguished, it is necessary for them to go and rekindle it among the *Tonicas*. The chief has considerable authority over those of his nation, and they are accustomed to obey him. This is not the case among the greater part of the other nations; they have their chiefs only in name, each one is his own master, and yet we never see any sedition among them. When the chief

of the Natchez dies, a certain number of men and women are obliged to immolate themselves to serve him in the other world. Many are already devoted to this death against the time when he shall die. On these occasions they strangle them. The French have done all in their power to prevent this barbarity, but they find great difficulty in saving any one. These people say that their ancestors crossed the seas to come to this country, and those who knew their habits and customs better than myself, assert that they came from China.

However this may be, the *Tonicas* and the *Natchez* are two considerable nations who ought to have each a missionary. The chief of the *Tonicas* is already a Christian, as I have said before; he has much influence over his own people, and in other respects every one agrees that this nation is very well disposed for Christianity. A missionary would find the same advantage among the *Natchez*, if he should have the happiness to convert the chief; but these two nations are in the district of the Reverend Capuchin Fathers, who even to this time have never acquired a knowledge of any Indian language.

We left Natchez on the 17th, and embarked, the Father Dumas and myself, in a boat which went out on a hunting expedition. Our people had not yet prepared their provisions, that is to say, they had not purchased and pounded their corn.

As the flats now began to be seen, we found there the eggs of the turtle, which were a new feast for us. These eggs are a little larger than pigeon's eggs, and are found in the sand of the flats, where the sun hatches them. The tracks which the turtles leave, enable us to discover the places where they have concealed their eggs. They are found in great quantities, and are made into omelettes, which are much relished by people who are accustomed to eat nothing but *gru*.

They reckon the distance from New Orleans to Natchez at nearly a hundred leagues, and from Natchez to *Yatous*, at forty.

We made this second passage without any other adventure, except that during one night we were overtaken by a violent storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning. You may judge whether a person is well protected from the rain under the covering of a single cloth. The next day an Indian who was ascending the river with us went on shore for the purpose of hunting. We continued our route, but had scarcely gone half a league when he appeared on the bank with a deer on his shoulders. We therefore cabined on the first flat we came to, for the purpose of drying our clothes and making a great feast. These repasts, which take place after a good chase, are perfectly savage in the way they are conducted, though nothing can be more pleasant. The animal is in pieces in a moment; nothing is lost; our voyagers place it on the fire or in the pot, each one according to his taste; their fingers and some little sticks supply the place of all kinds of utensils for cooking and for the table. To see them covered only with a cloth round the loins, more athletic, more browned than the Indians themselves, stretched out on the sand or squatting down like monkeys, and eating what they hold in their hands, one can scarcely know whether it is a troop of gipsies, or of people who are assisting at a witch festival.

On the 23d we arrived at *Yatous*, a French post within two leagues of the mouth of the river of that name, which empties into the Mississippi. There is an officer with the title of Commander, together with a dozen soldiers, and three or four planters. The grant of M. le Blanc was at this place, but it has gone to ruin like the others. The ground is elevated by mounds, little of it is cleared, and the air is, they say, unwholesome. The Commander, in honor of our arrival fired off all the artillery of the fort, which consists of two pieces of very small cannon. The fort is a barrack in which the Commander lodges, surrounded by a single palisade, but well defended by the situation of the place. He received us in a very friendly way, and we cabined in his court-

yard. Our two boats, one of which carried Father Souel. Missionary to the Yatous, arrived two days after us; the fort paid him the same honors which had been given to us. This dear Father had been dangerously ill during the voyage from Natchez to Yatous, and had begun to recover; but since my arrival here I have heard from him, that he had suffered a relapse of his illness, but was again convalescent when he wrote me. During our stay at Yatous, he purchased a house, or rather the cabin of a Frenchman, while waiting till he could make his arrangements to settle himself among the Indians, who are at a league distance from the French post. There are three different villages which speak three different languages, and compose one nation, which is not very numerous. Beyond this I know nothing with regard to them.

On the 26th we re-embarked, the Father Dumas and myself. From Yatous to the Akensas they reckon the distance at sixty leagues. We arrived there on the 7th of July, without any other adventure than having made a great feast of bear's meat, which one of our people had procured in the chase.

The villages of the *Akensas* are incorrectly placed on the map. The river at its mouth makes a fork, and into the upper branch empties a river which the Indians call *Niska*, or *White Water*, which is not marked at all on the map, although it is a very large stream. We enter by the lower branch; from the mouth of this branch to the place where the river separates into two streams, it is seven leagues, and from thence it is two leagues to the first village, which contains two nations, the *Tourimas* and the *Tougingas;* from this first village to the second there are two leagues by water and one league by land; this latter they call the village of the *Sauthouis;* the third village is a little higher up on the same bank of the river; this is the village of the *Kappas;* on the other bank, and opposite to this last village, are the French habitations. These three Indian villages, which contain four nations bearing different names, are known by the common name

of the Akensas, which name the French have also given to the river, although the Indians call it *ni gitai*, "Red water." They speak the same language, and are in all about twelve hundred souls.

We were a short distance from these settlements, when a company of young Indians having perceived us, uttered a loud cry and ran to the village: a French boat which had preceded us one day, had given notice of our arrival. We found all the village assembled at the landing place; no sooner had we landed, than an Indian enquired of one of our people, whom he knew, and who understood the language, "How many moons the Black Chief would remain among them?" "Always," replied the Frenchman. "You are deceiving me," was the Indian's immediate answer. The Frenchman assured him that he was not, but that "they should always have him among them, to teach them to know the *Great Spirit*, as had been done among the Illinois." The Indian believed him and said—"My heart laughs when you tell me this." I induced this same Frenchman to conduct me by land to the village of the *Sauthouis;* before arriving there we found the Chief under his *antixhon*, (this is the name which the French have given to a kind of cabin open on all sides, which the Indians use in the wilderness, that is, their open country, and when they wish to take the cool air.) He invited me to lie down on his mat, and presented me with some *sagamité*.* He spoke a single word to his little child who was there, and he immediately uttered the Indian cry, shouting with all his strength, *panianga sa, panianga sa*, "the Black Chief, the Black Chief." In an instant the whole village had surrounded the *antichon*. I caused them to be told with what design I had come, and could hear on all sides the word *igaton*, which my interpreter explained to me, as meaning, "that is good." All this company conducted

[* This has been explained in the former part of the letter, as a preparation of corn.]

me to the bank of the river, uttering loud cries; an Indian transported us over the river in his boat, and after having walked about the eighth of a league, we arrived at the French dwellings. I was lodged in the house of the Company of the Indies, which was that of the Commander when he is here, and found with great satisfaction that I was at the end of these two hundred leagues which I had to accomplish. I would rather twice make the voyage which we had just finished on the sea at the same season, than to recommence this one. The Father Dumas was only in the middle of his route to go to the Illinois, and embarked again on the morning after his arrival; from this place to the Illinois country he did not find a single habitation, but they scarcely ever failed to kill some buffaloes, which very well made amends to people who had nothing to live on but some *gru*.

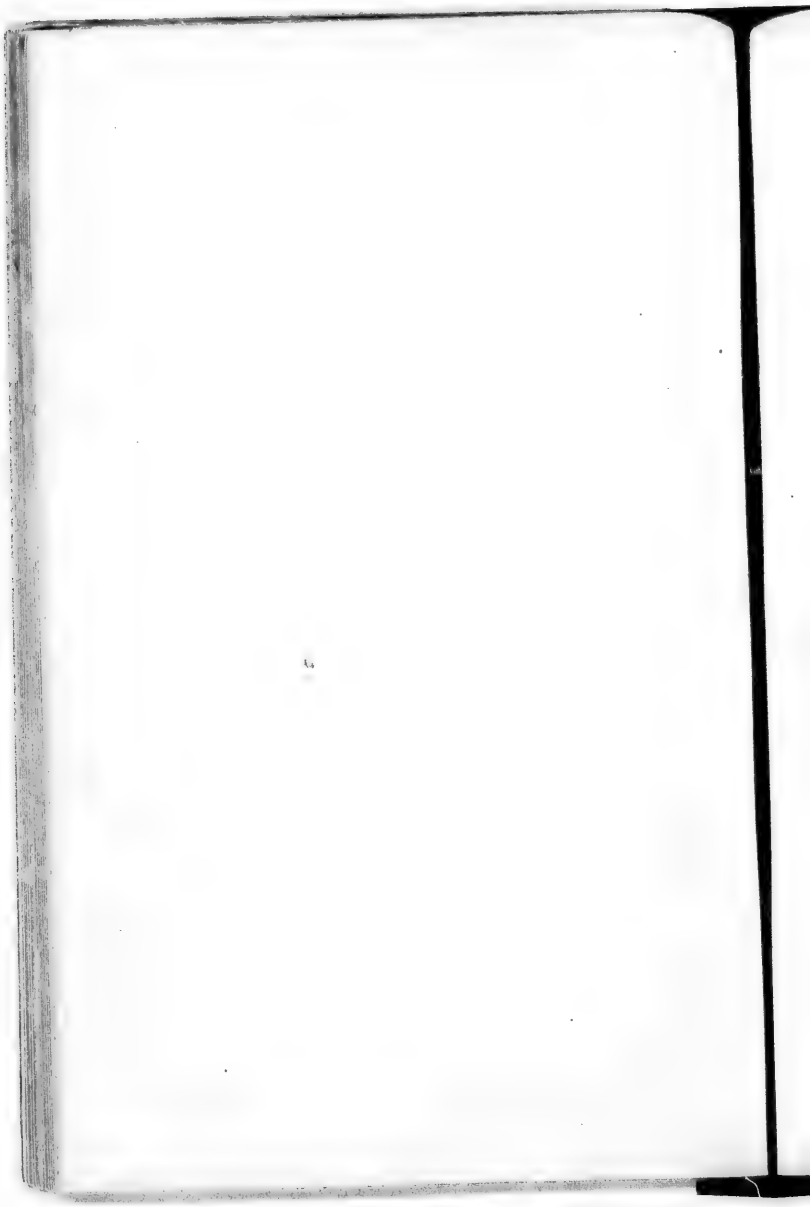
I have now reached the end of my long and tedious narrative. I have only written for yourself and for one other friend equally indulgent with yourself; it is Father Bernard, to whom I beg you to forward this letter. He is at Dijon. I will endeavor more fully to satisfy your curiosity, when I am better acquainted with the customs of the Indians in this region. You have not the same excuse as myself, for you are in the midst of that great theatre where the scene changes every day, and materials are furnished for the longest and most curious letters. I wrote you from New Orleans: have you received my letter?

I pray you to present my regards to the Reverend Father de Fontenai, and commend me to his holy prayers. I ask also an interest in yours. You are both of you always in my memory. Present also my respects to the Reverend Father Davaugour, and to the dear brother Talard. I pray that dear brother to write me by the first opportunity there is of sending to the Reverend Father de Beaubois, and above all to furnish me with the prints, particularly those representing the different mysteries in the life of our Lord: M. Cars will give them to him, if he asks

him in my name; he has promised them to me. This is a great means we are able to adopt of giving some idea of the mysteries of our religion to the Indians. They always get into ecstacies when they see a picture of St. Regis which I have in my chamber, which was engraved by M. Cars. They place the hand upon the mouth, which is a sign of admiration among them. *Ouakan taqué*, they cry out—"It is the Great Spirit." I tell them that it is not, that it is one who was a Black Robe Chief like myself, that he listened attentively to the words of the Great Spirit, and observed them through life, and that after his death he went to be with him in Heaven. Some pass their hand at different times over the face of the Saint, and then carry it to their own face. It is a ceremony which they use when they wish to show a mark of veneration to any one; then they place themselves in different parts of my chamber, and say each time laughing, "He looks at me, he almost speaks, he wants nothing but words." But these are trifles, and it is time for both of us to take breath.

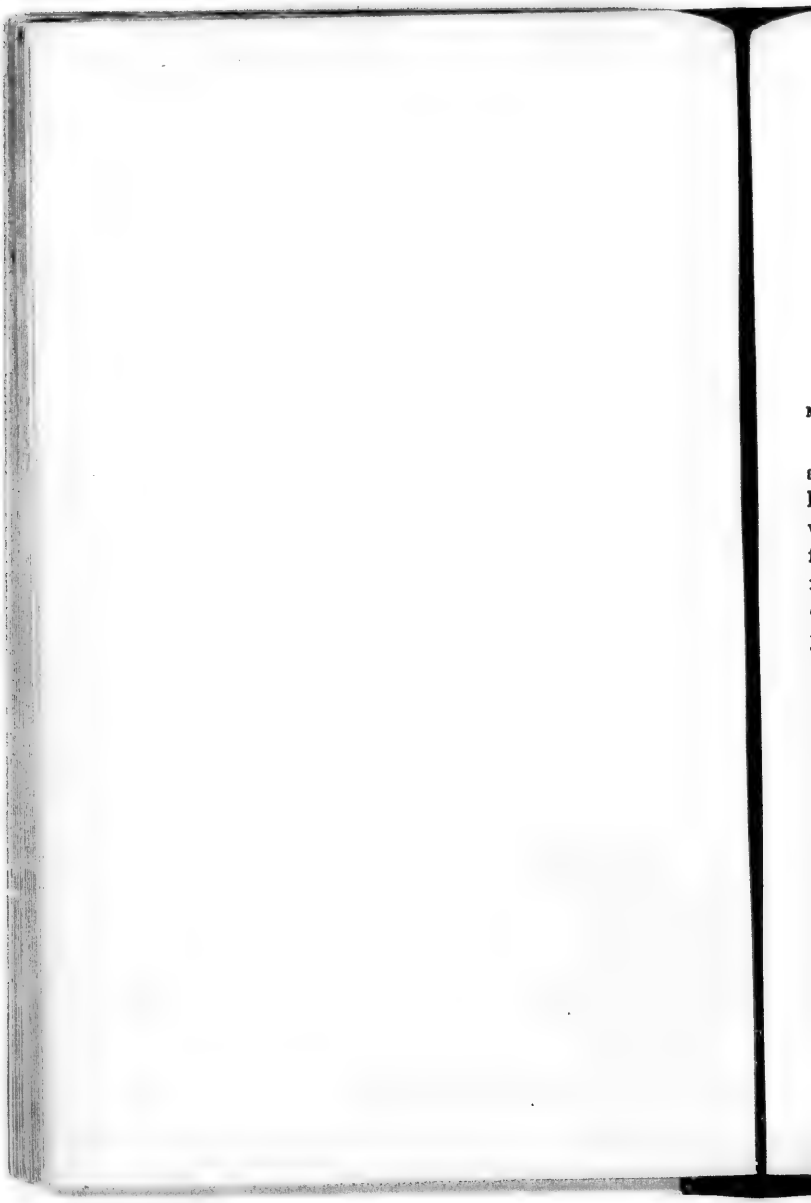
Adieu, &c

At Akensas, this 3rd *of October*, 1727.



MISSION TO THE ARKANSAS.

1727.



LETTER IX.

FROM FATHER DU POISSON, MISSIONARY TO THE AKENSAS, TO FATHER PATOUILLET.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

RECEIVE the compliments of a poor *Mississippien*, who has always esteemed you, and if you will permit him to say so, has loved you as much as the best of your friends. The distance which Providence has interposed between us, can never efface the feelings of regard which I entertain for you, and still less the remembrance I have of the friendship you bestowed upon me during the years that we lived together. The favor which I ask of you henceforth is, to think of me a lttle, to pray God for me, and to give me from time to time the news with regard to yourself, which I shall prize so highly. I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with the country and the customs of the Indians, to give you much information about them; I can only tell you that the Mississippi does not present anything beautiful to the voyager, anything as extraordinary as itself; nothing indeed can disfigure it more than the continual forest which lines its two banks, and the frightful solitude in which he is during his voyage. Having therefore nothing curious to write you concerning this country, permit me to tell you what has happened to me since my arrival at this post to which Providence destined me.

Two days after my arrival, the village of the *Sauthouis* deputed two Indians to ask me, whether I was willing they should come to chant the calumet. They were in their dress of ceremony,

well *matachè*, that is, having the body entirely painted of different colors, with the tails of wild cats hanging down from places where we usually represent the wings of Mercury, the calumet in their hands, and on their bodies some little bells, which announced to me their arrival even when they were at a distance. I answered them, that I was not at all like the French chiefs who commanded warriors, and who came with plunder to make them presents; that I had only come to make known to them the Great Spirit with whom they were unacquainted, and I had brought with me only those things which were necessary for my object, but that nevertheless I accepted their calumet for the time when a small canoe should be built for me; this was postponing them indefinitely; they passed the calumet across my face, and then returned with it to carry back my answer. Two days afterwards, the chiefs came to make me the same request, adding that it was without design that they wished to dance the calumet before me. *Without design* signifies among them, that they make a present without any expectation of a return But I was prepared for all this: I knew that the hope of gaining something rendered them so pressing, and that when an Indian gives even *without design*, it is necessary to give him double in return, or one displeases them. I therefore made them the same answer which I had given to the deputies. At last they returned again to the charge to ask me whether I was willing that at least their young people should come and dance before me *without design*, the dance called the *Scouting*, (it is this which they dance when they send out a scouting party against the enemy.) I answered them, that I should not at all find it tedious, but their young people could come and dance, and that I should see them with pleasure. All the village, except the women, accordingly came the next day at dawn, and there were nothing but dances, and chants, and speeches, until the middle of the day. Their dances, as you may well imagine, are something fantastical: the exactness with which

they keep time is as surprising as the contortions and efforts they make. I saw very well that it would not do to send them away without having made a great feast for them, and therefore borrowed of one of the French, a kettle similar to those which are used in the kitchen of the Invalides.* I gave them maize at discretion, and all things passed without any confusion. Two of them acted as cooks, divided the parts with the greatest impartiality, and distributed them in the same manner. Nothing was to be heard but the ordinary exclamation *Ho*, which each one pronounced when they presented him with his portion. Never have I seen people eat with a worse grace or better appetites. They returned home very well contented, but first some of the chiefs spoke to me again on the subject of receiving their calumet: I amused them as I had done hitherto, for it is a considerable expense to receive their calumet. In the beginning, when it was necessary to manage them, the directors of the grants of M. Laws, and the Commanders who received their calumet, made them great presents, and these Indians have supposed that I was going to revive the old custom. But even were I able to do so, I should act with exceeding caution, because there might be danger that at last they would not hear me speak of religion except from motives of interest, since moreover we know from experience that the more one gives to the Indians, the less probability is there of his being contented, and that gratitude is a virtue of which he has not the least idea.

I have not as yet had sufficient leisure to apply myself to the study of their language; but as they make me frequent visits, I put to them the question, *Talon jajai?* How do you call that? I am well enough acquainted with the language to make myself understood in the most common matters, and there is no Frenchman here who knows it thoroughly. They have as yet learned it

[* Meaning probably the *Hôtel des Invalides* in Paris, an asylum for aged and invalid soldiers.]

but superficially, and only as much as is necessary for purposes of trade, so that I at present am as well acquainted with it as they are. I foresee, however, that it will be very difficult for me to learn as much as is necessary to address these Indians on the subject of religion, while I have reason to believe that they think I am perfectly acquainted with their language. A Frenchman was lately speaking of me to one of them, when the latter said to him, "I know that he is a Great Spirit, who understands all things." You see that they do me infinitely more honor than I merit. Another addressed to me a long harangue, of which I understood nothing but the words *indatai*, "my father," *nyginguai*, "my sons." I however answered him at random when I saw that he was questioning me, *ae*, "yes," and *igalon*, "that is good." Afterwards he passed his hand over my face and my shoulders, and then did the same to himself. All these *agios* being finished, he went home with a very contented air. Another came some days afterwards to go through the same ceremony. As soon as I saw him I sent for a Frenchman, and begged him to explain to me what was said, without appearing to act as interpreter. I was desirous of knowing whether or not I had been mistaken in the reply I made to the other. He asked whether it seemed good to me to adopt him as my son, so that when he returned from the chase, and should *without design* lay his game at my feet, I should not ask him, as the other French do, "for what are you hungry?" (that is to say, what do you wish me to give you for this?) but that I should make him sit down, and should give him something to eat as I would to my son, and that when he returned another time to see me, I should say to him, "sit down my son, but hold, there is some vermilion and powder." You see from this the nature of these savages; they wish to appear generous in giving *without design*, but at the same time do not wish to lose anything. I answered this speech, *ignaton thé*, "that is very good, I approve

of it, I agree to that;" after which he passed his hand over me as the other had done.

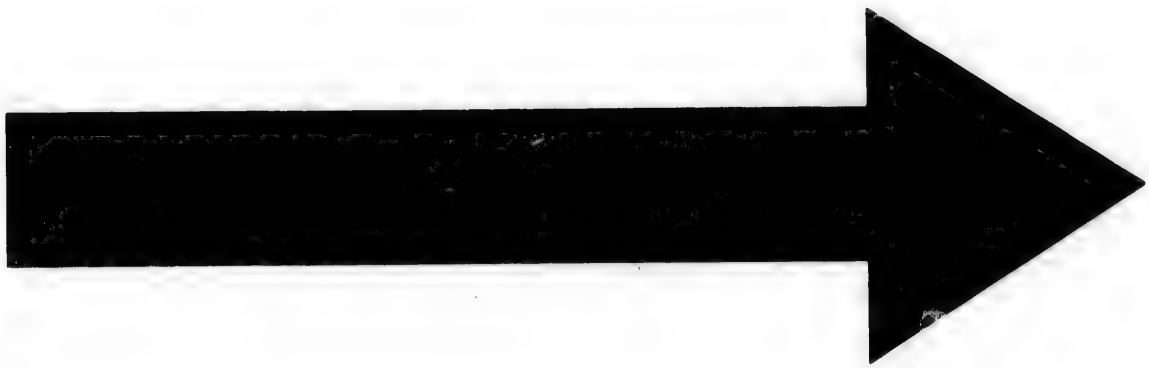
Let me give you another incident which shows the extent of their generosity. The day before yesterday I received the visit of a chief, and gave him something to smoke, to omit which would show that I was wanting in politeness. A moment afterwards he went out to get the skin of a deer *matachée* which he had left in the entry of the house where I am, and placed it on my shoulders. Such is the custom when they make presents of this kind. I begged the Frenchman to ask him, without its appearing to come from me, what he wished me to give him? "I give it *without design*," said he; "it is the way in which I would trade with my father!" (To *trade* signifies here to *give*.) Nevertheless, some moments afterwards, he said to the same Frenchman, that his wife was out of salt, and his son of powder. His object was that the Frenchman should tell me of it. The Indian never gives anything for nothing, and it is necessary for their sake to observe the same rule, or we should expose ourselves to their contempt. A skin *matachée* is a skin painted by the Indians with different colors, and on which they paint calumets, birds, and animals. Those of the deer serve as cloths for the table, and those of the buffalo as coverings for the bed.

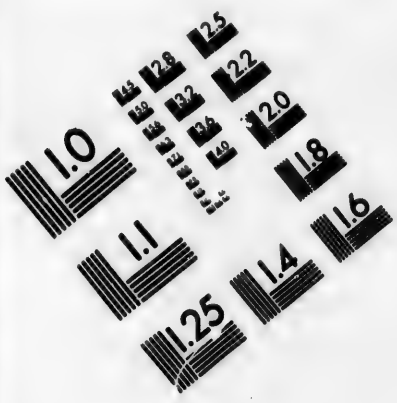
The French establishment among the Arkansas would have been considerable, if M. Laws had remained in credit four or five years longer. The grant which he had procured was at this place on a prairie boundless to the view, the beginning of which is about two gun-shots from the house in which I now am. The India Company had granted him sixteen leagues square, or a tract of about a hundred leagues round. His design was to build a city there, to establish manufactures, to have numbers of vassals and troops, in short to found there a duchy. He only commenced this work a year before his fall. The property which he had already sent into the country amounted to more than fifteen

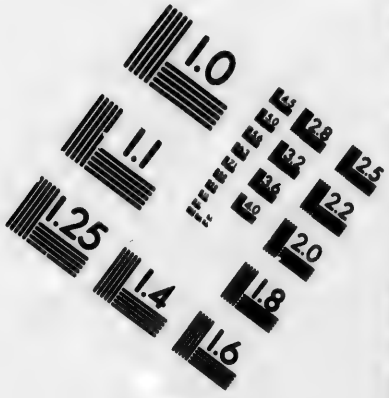
hundred thousand livres. He had among other things materials from which to arm and equip superbly two hundred cavalry soldiers. He had also purchased three hundred negroes. The French who were engaged for this grant, were people of all kinds of trades. The directors and the subalterns, with a hundred men, ascended the river in five boats, to go there and begin the establishment. They had first to provide provisions, to be in a state to receive those whom they had left at the mouth of the river. The Chaplain died on the way, and was buried on one of the shallows in the Mississippi. Twelve thousand Germans also were engaged for this grant. This was not a bad beginning for the first year, but M. Laws fell into disgrace. Of the three or four thousand Germans who had already left their country, the greater part died at the East, almost all at landing in the country, while the others were countermanded. The India Company took back their grant, and abandoned it a short time afterwards, so that every thing thus went to ruin. About thirty French are still here, being induced to remain by the salubrity of the climate and the excellence of the soil, for they have not received any aid. My arrival afforded them great pleasure, since it induced them to believe that the India Company had no idea of abandoning this region, as had been supposed, or they would not have sent thither a missionary. I cannot express to you the joy therefore with which these good people received me. I found them in great want of all things, and this misery, together with the excessive and even extraordinary heats which had been experienced that year, had made them all ill in bed. I did what I could for their relief, and the few remedies which I brought with me, came most seasonably. The occupation however which the sick gave me, did not at all prevent my making, on each Sunday and Festival day, one exhortation during Mass, and also giving instruction after Vespers. I have had the consolation of seeing that the greater part have profited by it to come forward to the

Sacraments, and that the others are disposed to do so. We are indeed well recompensed for the greatest toils, if they are followed by the conversion of even a single sinner.

The privations of the sea and those of the Mississippi, which are indeed much more severe, the change of climate, of food, of every thing, have produced no alteration in my health. I am the only one of the French who has escaped sickness since we have been in the country, although they commiserated me for the feebleness of my health when I left France. But Father Souel, who on the excellence of his constitution received no such sympathy, has already been three times ill since he has been in the country. Pray God that He will give me grace to consecrate what strength I have to the conversion of these Indians. As far as human reason can enable us to judge, there is little to be accomplished among them, at least in the beginning. All my hope is in the grace of God. I have the honor to be with respect, &c.







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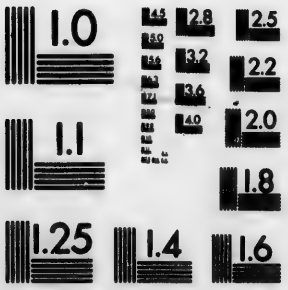

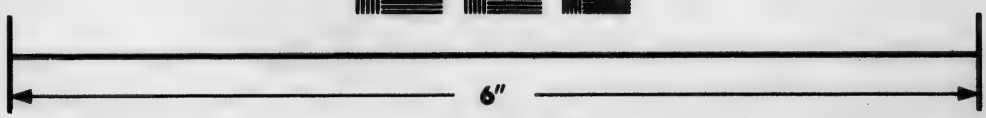

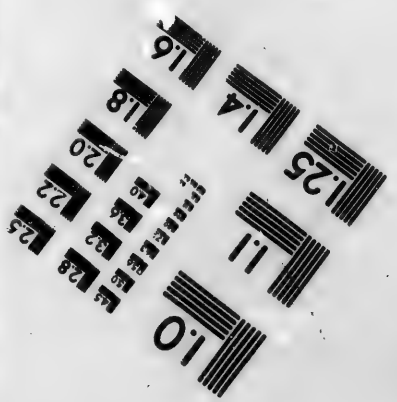

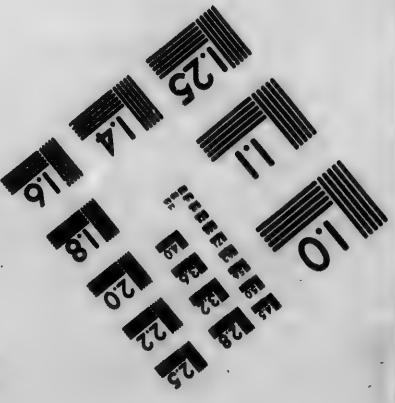

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THE MASSACRE BY THE NATCHEZ.

1729.

LETTER X.

FROM FATHER LE PETIT, MISSIONARY, TO FATHER D'AVAUGOUR, PROCURATOR OF THE MISSIONS IN NORTH AMERICA.

At New Orleans, the 12th of July, 1730.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

You cannot be ignorant of the sad event which has desolated that part of the French Colony established at *Natchez*, on the right bank of the Mississippi river, at the distance of a hundred and twenty leagues from its mouth. Two of our missionaries who were engaged in the conversion of the Indians, have been included in the almost general massacre which this barbarous nation made of the French, at a time too when they had not the least reason to suspect their perfidy. A loss so great as this infant mission has sustained, will continue for a long time to excite our deepest regrets.

As you could only have learned in a confused manner the events of this dark treachery, I will endeavor to relate to you all the circumstances; but first I think that it would be best to make you acquainted with the character of these perfidious savages, called the *Natchez*. When I have described to you the religion, the manners, and the customs of these barbarians, I will proceed to the history of the tragical event which I design to narrate, and will in detail recount all those circumstances, of which I am certain you have hitherto had no knowledge.

This nation of Indians inhabits one of the most beautiful and

fertile countries in the world, and is the only one on this continent which appears to have any regular worship. Their religion in certain points is very similar to that of the ancient Romans. They have a temple filled with idols, which are different figures of men and of animals, and for which they have the most profound veneration. Their temple in shape resembles an earthen oven, a hundred feet in circumference. They enter it by a little door about four feet high, and not more than three in breadth. No window is to be seen there. The arched roof of the edifice is covered with three rows of mats, placed one upon the other, to prevent the rain from injuring the masonry. Above on the outside are three figures of eagles made of wood, and painted red, yellow, and white. Before the door is a kind of shed with folding doors, where the Guardian of the Temple is lodged; all around it runs a circle of palisades, on which are seen exposed the skulls of all the heads which their warriors had brought back from the battles in which they had been engaged with the enemies of their nation.

In the interior of the Temple are some shelves arranged at a certain distance from each other, on which are placed cane baskets of an oval shape, and in these are enclosed the bones of their ancient chiefs, while by their side are those of their victims whom they had caused to be strangled, to follow their masters into the other world. Another separate shelf supports many flat baskets very gorgeously painted, in which they preserve their idols. These are figures of men and women made of stone or baked clay, the heads and the tails of extraordinary serpents, some stuffed owls, some pieces of crystal, and some jaw bones of large fish. In the year 1699, they had there a bottle and the foot of a glass, which they guarded as very precious.

In this temple they take care to keep up a perpetual fire, and they are very particular to prevent its ever blazing; they do not use anything for it but dry wood of the walnut or oak. The old

men are obliged to carry, each one in his turn, a large log of wood into the enclosure of the palisade. The number of the Guardians of the Temple is fixed, and they serve by the quarter. He who is on duty is placed like a sentinel under the shed, from whence he examines whether the fire is not in danger of going out. He feeds it with two or three large logs, which do not burn except at the extremity, and which they never place one on the other, for fear of their getting into a blaze.

Of the women, the sisters of the great Chief alone have liberty to enter within the Temple. The entrance is forbidden to all the others, as well as to the common people, even when they carry something there to feast to the memory of their relations, whose bones repose in the Temple. They give the dishes to the Guardian, who carries them to the side of the basket in which are the bones of the dead; this ceremony lasts only during one moon. The dishes are afterwards placed on the palisades which surround the Temple, and are abandoned to the fallow-deer.

The sun is the principal object of veneration to these people; as they cannot conceive of anything which can be above this heavenly body, nothing else appears to them more worthy of their homage. It is for the same reason that the great Chief of this nation, who knows nothing on the earth more dignified than himself, takes the title of Brother of the Sun, and the credulity of the people maintains him in the despotic authority which he claims. To enable them better to converse together, they raise a mound of artificial soil, on which they build his cabin, which is of the same construction as the temple. The door fronts the East, and every morning the great Chief honors by his presence the rising of his elder brother, and salutes him with many howlings as soon as he appears above the horizon. Then he gives orders that they shall light his calumet;* he makes him an offering of the first three puffs which he draws; afterwards raising his hands above

* The calumet is a large pipe which these Indians use.

his head, and turning from the East to the West, he shows him the direction which he must take in his course.

There are in this cabin a number of beds on the left hand at entering: but on the right is only the bed of the great Chief, ornamented with different painted figures. This bed consists of nothing but a mattress of canes and reeds, very hard, with a square log of wood, which serves for a pillow. In the middle of the cabin is seen a small stone, and no one should approach the bed until he has made the circuit of this stone. Those who enter salute by a howl, and advance even to the bottom of the cabin, without looking at the right side, where is the Chief. Then they give a new salute by raising their arms above the head, and howling three times. If it be any one whom the Chief holds in consideration, he answers by a slight sigh and makes a sign to him to be seated. He thanks him for his politeness by a new howl. At every question which the Chief puts to him, he howls once before he answers, and when he takes his leave, he prolongs a single howl until he is out of his presence.

When the great Chief dies, they demolish his cabin, and then raise a new mound, on which they build the cabin of him who is to replace him in this dignity, for he never lodges in that of his predecessor. The old men prescribe the laws for the rest of the people, and one of their principles is, to have a sovereign respect for the great Chief, as being the Brother of the Sun and the Master of the Temple. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and when they leave this world they go, they say, to live in another, there to be recompensed or punished. The rewards to which they look forward, consist principally in feasting, and their chastisement in the privation of every pleasure. Thus they think that those who have been the faithful observers of their laws will be conducted into a region of pleasures, where all kinds of exquisite viands will be furnished them in abundance, that their delightful and tranquil days will flow on in the midst of festivals,

dances, and women; in short, that they will revel in all imaginable pleasures. On the contrary, the violators of their laws will be cast upon lands unfruitful and entirely covered with water, where they will not have any kind of corn, but will be exposed entirely naked to the sharp bites of the musquitoes, that all nations will make war upon them, that they will never eat meat, and have no nourishment but the flesh of crocodiles, spoiled fish, and shell-fish.

These people blindly obey the least wish of their great Chief. They look upon him as absolute master, not only of their property but also of their lives, and not one of them would dare to refuse him his head, if he should demand it; for whatever labors he commands them to execute, they are forbidden to exact any wages. The French, who are often in need of hunters or of rowers for their long voyages, never apply to any one but the great Chief. He furnishes all the men they wish, and receives payment, without giving any part to those unfortunate individuals, who are not permitted even to complain. One of the principal articles of their religion, and particularly for the servants of the great Chief, is that of honoring his funeral rites by dying with him, that they may go and serve him in the other world. In their blindness they willingly submit to this law, in the foolish belief, that in the train of their Chief they will go to enjoy the greatest happiness.

To give an idea of this bloody ceremony, it is necessary to know that as soon as an heir presumptive has been born to the great Chief, each family that has an infant at the breast is obliged to pay him homage. From all these infants they choose a certain number whom they destine for the service of the young prince, and as soon as they are of a competent age, they furnish them with employments suited to their talents. Some pass their lives in hunting, or in fishing, to furnish supplies for the table; others are employed in agriculture, while others serve to fill up

his retinue. If he happen to die, all these servants sacrifice themselves with joy to follow their dear master. They first put on all their finery, and repair to the place opposite to the temple, where all the people are assembled. After having danced and sung a sufficiently long time, they pass around their neck a cord of buffalo hair with a running knot, and immediately the ministers appointed for executions of this kind, come forward to strangle them, recommending them to go and rejoin their master, and to render to him in the other world services even more honorable than those which had occupied them in this.

The principal servants of the great Chief having been strangled in this way, they strip the flesh off their bones, particularly those of their arms and thighs, and leave them to dry for two months in a kind of tomb, after which they take them out to be shut up in the baskets, which are placed in the temple by the side of the bones of their master. As for the other servants, their relatives carry them home with them, and bury them with their arms and clothes.

The same ceremony is observed in like manner on the death of the brothers and sisters of the great Chief. The women are always strangled to follow the latter, except they have infants at the breast, in which case they continue to live, for the purpose of nourishing them. And we often see many who endeavor to find nurses, or who themselves strangle their infants, so that they shall not lose the right of sacrificing themselves in the public place, according to the ordinary ceremonies, and as the law prescribes.

This government is hereditary; it is not, however, the son of the reigning chief that succeeds his father, but the son of his sister, or the first princess of the blood. This policy is founded on the knowledge they have of the licentiousness of their females. They are not sure, they say, that the children of the chief's wife

may be of the blood royal, whereas the son of the sister of the great Chief must be, at least on the side of the mother.

The princesses of the blood never espouse any but men of obscure family, and they have but one husband, but they have the right of dismissing him whenever it pleases them, and of choosing another among those of the nation, provided he has not made any other alliance among them. If the husband has been guilty of infidelity, the princess may have his head cut off in an instant; but she is not herself subject to the same law, for she may have as many lovers as she pleases, without the husband having any power to complain. In the presence of his wife he acts with the most profound respect, never eats with her, and salutes her with howls, as is done by her servants. The only satisfaction he has is, that he is freed from the necessity of laboring, and has entire authority over those who serve the princess.

In former times the nation of the Natchez was very large. It counted sixty villages and eight hundred suns or princes; now it is reduced to six little villages and eleven suns. In each of these villages there is a temple where the fire is always kept burning as in that of the great Chief, whom all the other chiefs obey.

The great Chief nominates to the most important offices of the state; such are the two war chiefs, the two masters of ceremony for the worship of the temple, the two officers who preside over the other ceremonies which are observed when foreigners come to treat of peace, another who has the inspection of the public works, four others charged with the arrangement of the festivals with which they publicly entertain the nation, and such strangers as come to visit them. All these ministers who execute the will of the great chief are treated with the same respect and obedience as if he personally gave the orders.

Each year the people assemble to plant one vast field with Indian corn, beans, pumpkins, and melons, and then again they col-

lect in the same way to gather the harvest. A large cabin situated on a beautiful prairie is set apart to hold the fruits of this harvest. Once in the summer, towards the end of July, the people gather by order of the great Chief, to be present at a grand feast which he gives them. This festival lasts for three days and three nights, and each one contributes what he can to furnish it; some bring game, others fish, &c. They have almost constant dances, while the great Chief and his sister are in an elevated lodge covered with boughs, from whence they can see the joy of their subjects. The princes, the princesses, and those who by their office are of distinguished rank, are arranged very near the Chief, to whom they show their respect and submission by an infinite variety of ceremonies.

The great Chief and his sister make their entrance in the place of the assembly on a litter borne by eight of their greatest men: the chief holds in his hand a great sceptre ornamented with painted plumes, and all the people dance and sing about him in testimony of the public joy. The last day of this feast he causes all his subjects to approach, and makes them a long harangue, in which he exhorts them to fulfil all their duties to religion; he recommends them above all things to have a great veneration for the spirits which reside in the temple, and carefully to instruct their children. If any one has distinguished himself by some act of zeal, he is then publicly praised. Such a case happened in the year 1702. The temple having been struck with lightning and reduced to ashes, seven or eight women cast their infants into the midst of the flames to appease the wrath of Heaven. The chief called these heroines, and gave them great praises for the courage with which they had made the sacrifice of that which they held most dear; he finished his panegyric by exhorting the other women to imitate so beautiful an example in similar circumstances.

The fathers of families do not fail to carry to the temple the

first of their fruits, their corn and vegetables. It is the same even with presents which are made to this nation; they are immediately offered at the gate of the temple, when the Guardian, after having displayed and presented them to the spirits, carries them to the house of the great Chief, who makes a distribution of them as he judges best, without any person testifying the least discontent.

They never plant their fields without having first presented the seed in the temple with the accustomed ceremonies. As soon as these people approach the temple, they raise their arms by way of respect, and utter three howls, after which they place their hands on the earth, and raise themselves again three times with as many reiterated howls. When any one has merely to pass before the temple, he only pauses to salute it by his downcast eyes and raised arms. If a father or mother see their son fail in the performance of this ceremony, they will punish him immediately with repeated blows of a stick.

Such are the ceremonies of the Natchez Indians with regard to their religion. Those of marriage are very simple. When a young man thinks of marrying, he has only to address himself to the father of the girl, or if she have none, to her eldest brother, and they agree on the price, which he pays in skins or merchandise. When a girl has even lived a licentious life, they make no difficulty in receiving her, if there is the least idea that she will change her conduct when she is married. Neither do they trouble themselves as to what family she belongs, provided that she pleases them. As to the relatives of the girl, their only care is to inform themselves whether he who asks her is an able hunter, a good warrior, and an excellent workman. These qualities diminish the price which they have a right to ask on the marriage.

When the parties have agreed, the future husband goes to the chase with his friends, and when he has sufficient either of

game or of fish, to feast the two families who have contracted the alliance, they assemble at the house of the parents of the girl. They particularly serve the new married pair, who eat from the same dish. The repast being ended, the bridegroom smokes the calumet towards the parents of his wife, and then towards his own parents, after which all the guests retire. The new married people remain together until the next day, and then the husband conducts his wife to the residence of her father-in-law, where they live until the family has built for him a cabin of his own. While they are constructing it, he passes the whole day in the chase to furnish food, which he gives to those who are employed in this work.

The laws permit the Natchez to have as many wives as they choose, nevertheless the common people generally have but one or two. This however is not the case with the chiefs, their number is greater, because having the right to oblige the people to cultivate their fields, without giving them any wages, the number of their wives is no expense to them.

The marriage of the chiefs is made with less ceremony. They content themselves with sending to fetch the father of the girl whom they wish to espouse, and they declare to him that they will give her the rank of their wives. They do not fail however, as soon as the marriage is consummated, to make a present to the father and mother. Although they have many wives, they keep but one or two in their own cabins: the rest remain at the houses of their parents, where they go to see them when they wish.

At certain periods of the moon these Indians never live with their wives. Jealousy has so little place in their hearts, that many find no difficulty in lending their wives to their friends. This indifference in the conjugal union results from the liberty they have of changing when it seems good to them, provided however that their wives have never borne children to them, for

if any have been born of the marriage, nothing but death can separate them.

When this nation sends out a detachment for war, the chief of the party erects two kinds of poles painted red from the top to the bottom, ornamented with red plumes, and arrows and tomahawks, also painted red. These poles are pointed to the side to which they are to carry the war. Those who wish to join the party, after having ornamented and daubed themselves with different colors, come to harangue the war chief. This harangue, which one makes after the other, and which lasts nearly half an hour, consists of a thousand protestations of service, by which they assure him that they ask nothing more than to die with him, that they are charmed to learn of so able a warrior the art of taking scalps, and that they fear neither the hunger nor fatigues to which they are going to be exposed.

When a sufficient number of braves have presented themselves to the war chief, he causes to be made at his house a beverage which they call the War Medicine. This is an emetic, which they make from a root they boil in large kettles full of water. The warriors, sometimes to the number of three hundred, having seated themselves about the kettle, they serve each one with two pots of it. The ceremony is to swallow them with a single effort, and then to throw them up immediately by the mouth, with efforts so violent that they can be heard at a great distance.

After this ceremony, the war chief appoints the day of departure, that each one may prepare provisions necessary for the campaign. During this time, the braves repair evening and morning to the place before the Temple, where after having danced and related in detail the brilliant actions in which their bravery was conspicuous, they chant their death songs.

To see the extreme joy they show at their departure, we should say that they had already signalized their valor by some great

victory, but a very small thing alone is necessary to disconcert their plans. They are so superstitious with respect to dreams, that a single one of evil augury can arrest the execution of their enterprise, and oblige them to return when they are on the march. We see parties, which after having gone through with all the ceremonies I have mentioned, immediately break off from their expedition, because they have heard a dog bark in an extraordinary manner: in an instant their ardor for glory is changed into a perfect panic.

When on the war-path, they march in single file: four or five men who are the best walkers lead the way, and keep in advance of the army a quarter of a league, to observe every thing, and give immediate notice. They encamp every evening an hour before sunset, and lie down about a large fire, each one with his arms near him. Before they encamp, they take the precaution to send out twenty warriors to the distance of a half league around the camp, for the purpose of avoiding all surprise. They never post sentinels during the night, but as soon as they have supped, they extinguish all the fires. At night the war chief exhorts them not to give themselves up to a profound sleep, and to keep their arms always in a state of readiness. He appoints a place where they shall rally in case they are attacked during the night and put to flight.

As the war Chiefs always carry with them their idols, or what they call their Spirits, well secured in some skins, at night they suspend them from a small pole painted red, which they erect in a slanting position, so that it may be bent on the side towards the enemy. The warriors, before they go to sleep, with tomahawk in hand, pass one after the other in a dance before these pretended Spirits, at the same time uttering the fiercest threats towards the side on which are their enemies.

When the war party is considerable, as it enters the enemy's country, they march in five or six columns. They have many

spies, who go out on scouting expeditions. If they perceive that their march is known, they ordinarily adopt the resolution of retracing their steps, leaving a small troop of from ten to twenty men who detach themselves, and endeavor to surprise some hunters at a distance from the villages; on their return they chant their songs with reference to the scalps they have taken. If they have taken any prisoners, they force them to sing and dance for some days before the temple, after which they present them to the relatives of those who had been killed. These relatives are dissolved in tears during this ceremony, and drying their eyes with the scalps which have been taken, they contribute among themselves to recompense the warriors who have taken these captives, whose lot is to be burned.

The Natchez, like all the other nations of Lousiana, distinguish by particular names those who have killed a greater or less number of the enemy. The old war chiefs distribute these names according to the merit of the warriors. To deserve the title of a great man-slayer, it is necessary to have taken ten slaves or to have carried off twenty scalps. When a person understands their language, the name itself of a warrior enables him to learn all his exploits. Those who, for the first time, have taken a scalp or made a captive, do not sleep at their return with their wives, and do not eat any meat; they ought not to partake of anything but fish and thickened milk. This abstinence lasts for six months. If they fail to observe it, they imagine that the soul of him whom they have killed will cause them to die through sorcery, that they will never again obtain any advantage over their enemies, and that the slightest wounds they may receive will prove fatal.

They take extreme care that the great Chief shall not in any way expose his life when he goes to war. If, carried away by his valor, he should happen to be killed, the Chiefs of the party and the other principal warriors would be put to death on their return; but executions of this kind are almost without example,

on account of the precautions they take to preserve him from this evil.

This nation, like the others, has its medicine-men; these are generally old men, who without study or any science, undertake to cure all complaints. They do not attempt this by simples, or by drugs; all their art consists in different juggleries; that is to say, that they dance and sing night and day about the sick man, and smoke without ceasing, swallowing the smoke of the tobacco. These jugglers eat scarcely anything during all the time that they are engaged in the cure of the sick, but their chants and their dances are accompanied by contortions so violent, that although they are entirely naked and should naturally suffer from cold, yet they are always foaming at the mouth. They have a little basket in which they keep what they call their Spirits, that is to say, small roots of different kinds, heads of owls, small parcels of the hair of fallow deer, some teeth of animals, some small stones or pebbles, and other similar trifles.

It appears that to restore health to the sick, they invoke without ceasing that which they have in their basket. Some of them have there a certain root, which by its smell can put serpents to sleep and render them senseless. After having rubbed their hands and body with this root, they take hold of these reptiles without fearing their bite, which is mortal. Sometimes they cut, with a flint, the part afflicted with the malady, and then suck out all the blood they can draw from it, and in returning it immediately into a dish, they at the same time spit out a little piece of wood, or straw, or leather, which they have concealed under the tongue. Drawing to it the attention of the relatives of the sick man, "There," say they, "is the cause of the sickness." These medicine-men are always paid in advance. If the sick man recovers, their gain is very considerable, but if he should die, they are sure to have their heads cut off by the relatives or friends of the deceased. This never fails to be done, and even

the relatives of the medicine-men find nothing at all of which to complain, and do not testify any concern.

There is the same rule with some other jugglers, who undertake to procure rain or fair weather. These are commonly indolent, old men, who wishing to avoid the labor which is required in hunting, fishing, and the cultivation of the fields, exercise this dangerous trade to gain a support for their families. Towards spring, the nation taxes itself to purchase from these jugglers favorable weather for the fruits of the earth. If the harvest prove abundant, they gain a handsome reward, but if it is unfortunate, they take it from them, and cut off their heads. Thus those who engage in this profession risk everything to gain everything. In other respects their life is very idle; they have no other inconvenience than that of fasting and dancing with a pipe in their mouth, full of water and pierced like a watering-pot, which they blow into the air on the side where the clouds are thickest. In one hand they hold the *sicicouet*, which is a kind of rattle, and in the other their spirits, which they stretch out towards the clouds, uttering frightful cries to invite them to burst upon their fields.

If it is pleasant weather for which they ask, they do not use these pipes, but they mount on the roof of their cabins, and with their arms make signs to the clouds, blowing with all their strength, that it shall not stop over their lands, but pass beyond. When the clouds are dissipated according to their wish, they dance and sing about their spirits, which they place reverently on a kind of pillow; they redouble their fasts, and when the cloud has passed, they swallow the smoke of tobacco, and hold up their pipes to the sky.

Although they never show any favor to these charlatans, when they do not obtain what they ask, yet the profit they receive is so great, when by chance they succeed, that we see a great number of these savages who do not at all fear to run the risks. It is

to be observed, that he who undertakes to furnish rain, never engages to procure pleasant weather. There is another kind of charlatans to whom this privilege belongs, and when you ask them the reason, they answer boldly that their spirits can give but the one or the other.

When one of these Indians dies, his relatives come to mourn his death during an entire day, then they array him in his most beautiful dresses, they paint his face and his hair, and ornament him with plumes, after which they carry him to the grave prepared for him, placing by his side his arms, a kettle, and some provisions. For the space of a month, his relatives come at the dawn of day and at the beginning of the night, to weep for half an hour at his grave. Each one names his degree of relationship. If he were the father of a family, the wife cries, "My dear husband, ah! how I regret you!" The children cry, "My dear father!" The others, "My uncle! my cousin!" &c. The nearest relations continue this ceremony for three months; they cut off their hair in sign of grief, they abstain from painting the body, and are never found at any assembly for festivity.

When any foreign nation comes to treat of peace with the Natchez Indians, they send their couriers to give notice of the day and hour when they shall make their entrance. The great Chief orders the masters of ceremony to prepare all things for this grand occasion. They begin by naming those who during each day should support the strangers, for the expence never falls upon the chief, but always on his subjects. Then they clear the roads, they sweep the cabins, they arrange the seats in a large hall which is on the mound of the great Chief by the side of his cabin. His throne, which is on an elevation, is painted and ornamented, and the bottom is furnished with beautiful mats.

On the day that the ambassadors are to make their entrance, all the nation assembles. The masters of ceremony place the princes, the chiefs of the villages, and the old chiefs of quality

near the great Chief, on particular seats. When the ambassadors arrive, and are within five hundred steps of the great Chief, they stop and chant the song of peace. The ambassage ordinarily consists of thirty men and six females. Six of the best made, and who have the finest voices, march in front; they are followed by the others who chant in like manner, regulating the cadence with the *sicicouet*. The six females are the last.

When the chief has directed them to approach, they advance; those who have the calumets, chant and dance with much agility, now turning around each other, and now presenting themselves in front, but always with violent movements and extraordinary contortions. When they have entered the circle, they dance about the chair on which the chief is seated, they rub him with their calumets from his feet even to his head, and after that go back to find those who belong to their suite. Then they fill one of their calumets with tobacco, and holding the fire in one hand, they advance altogether before the chief and smoke it: they direct the first puff of smoke towards the heavens, the second towards the earth, and the others around the horizon, after which they without ceremony present the pipe to the princes and to the other chiefs.

This ceremony having been finished, the ambassadors, as a token of alliance, rub their hands on the stomach of the chief, and rub themselves over the whole body; they then place their calumets before the chief on small forks, while the person among the ambassadors who is particularly charged with the orders of his nation, delivers an harangue which lasts for an entire hour. When he has finished, they make a sign to the strangers to be seated on the benches ranged near the great Chief, who responds to them by a discourse of equal length. Then the master of ceremonies lights the great calumet of peace, and makes the strangers smoke, who swallow the tobacco smoke. The great Chief enquires of them, whether they arrived safe?

that is, whether they are well, and those who are around them go one after the other to discharge the same office of politeness. After which they conduct them to the cabin which has been prepared for them, and where they are feasted.

That same evening at sunset, the ambassadors, with the calumet in their hands, go with singing to find the great Chief, and having raised him on their shoulders, they transport him to the quarter in which their cabin is situated. They spread on the ground a large skin, on which they cause him to sit down. One of them places himself behind him, and putting his hands on the Chief's shoulders, he agitates all his body, while the others, seated in a circle on the ground, chant the history of their distinguished deeds. After this ceremony, which is repeated night and morning for four days, the great Chief returns to his cabin. When he pays his last visit to the ambassadors, these place a stake at his feet, about which they seat themselves: the braves of the nation having arrayed themselves in all their finery, dance around, striking the stake, and in turn recounting their great exploits in war, then follows the presentation of presents to the ambassadors, which consist of kettles, hatchets, guns, powder, balls, &c.

The day following this last ceremony, it is permitted to the ambassadors to walk through the whole village, which before they were not able to do. Then every evening they give them spectacles, that is to say, the men and women in their most beautiful dresses assemble at the public place, and dance until the night is far advanced. When they are ready to return home, the masters of the ceremonies furnish them with the provisions necessary for the journey.

After having thus given you a slight idea of the character and customs of the Natchez Indians, I proceed, my Reverend Father, as I have promised you, to enter on a detail of their perfidy and treason. It was on the second of December of the year 1729,

that we learned they had surprised the French, and had massacred almost all of them. This sad news was first brought to us by one of the planters, who had escaped their fury. It was confirmed to us on the following day by other French fugitives, and finally, some French women whom they had made slaves, and were forced afterwards to restore, brought us all the particulars.

At the first rumour of an event so sad, the alarm and consternation was general in New Orleans. Although the massacre had taken place more than a hundred leagues from here, you would have supposed that it had happened under our own eyes; each one was mourning the loss of a relative, a friend, or some property; all were alarmed for their own lives, for there was reason to fear that the conspiracy of the Indians had been general.

This unlooked for massacre began on Monday, the 28th of October, about nine o'clock in the morning. Some cause of dissatisfaction which the Natchez thought they had with the Commander,* and the arrival of a number of richly loaded boats for

* [The "cause of dissatisfaction which the Natchez thought they had with the Commander" was of some importance, rather more so than Father le Petit gives us to understand. We find it thus related in a history of the State:—"M. du Chopart, governor of Fort Rosalie, was a man of an overbearing disposition and vindictive temper, who had made himself odious to the Indians by different acts of injustice. Having determined to build a town, he selected, with wanton cruelty, the site of a village of the Natchez, then occupied by a numerous population of the unoffending people. Accordingly he directed the chiefs to remove the inhabitants, and plant them in another place. The Natchez, perceiving that their ruin was resolved on, endeavored to gain time, while they effected a union among themselves, and an alliance with the other tribes. By the promise of a tribute for each hut, they succeeded in inducing the Commander to postpone the execution of his resolve until after the harvest. . . . . A general massacre ensued. M. de Chopart fell by the hands of one of the meanest of the Indians, the Chiefs disdaining to stain their hands with his blood."

Bancroft says,—"The Commander Chopart, swayed by a brutal avarice,

the garrison and the colonists, determined them to hasten their enterprise, and to strike their blow sooner than they had agreed with the other confederate tribes. And it was thus that they carried their plan into execution. First they divided themselves, and sent into the fort, into the village, and into the two grants, as many Indians as there were French in each of these places; then they feigned that they were going out for a grand hunt, and undertook to trade with the French for guns, powder, and ball, offering to pay them as much, and even more than was customary, and in truth, as there was no reason to suspect their fidelity, they made at that time an exchange of their poultry and corn, for some arms and ammunition which they used advantageously against us. It is true that some expressed their distrust, but this was thought to have so little foundation, that they were treated as cowards who were frightened at their own shadows. They had been on their guard against the *Tchactas*, but as for the *Natchez*, they had never distrusted them, and they were so persuaded of their good faith, that it increased their hardihood. Having thus posted themselves in different houses, provided with the arms obtained from us, they attacked at the same time each his man, and in less than two hours they massacred more than two hundred of the French. The best known are M. de Chepar, Commander of the post, M. du Codere, Commander among the Yazous, M. des Ursins, Messieurs de Kolly, father and son, Messieurs de Longrays, des Noyers, Bailly, &c.

The Father du Poisson* had just performed the funeral rites of his associate, the Brother Crucy, who had died very suddenly

demanded as a plantation the very site of the principal village." (*Hist. U. States*, iii., p. 360.) And the Jesuit Father Vivier, in one of the succeeding letters in this volume, from "the Mission to the Illinois," says, when alluding to this massacre, "*La tyrannie qu'un Commandant François* entreprit d'exercer sur eux, les poussa a bout."]

* Author of the last two Letters.

of a sun-stroke: he was on his way to consult M. Perrier, and to adopt with him proper measures to enable the Akensas to descend to the banks of the Mississippi, for the accommodation of the voyagers. He arrived among the Natchez on the 26th. of November, that is, two days before the massacre. The next day, which was the first Sunday of Advent, he said Mass in the Parish, and preached in the absence of the Curé. He was to have returned in the afternoon to his Mission among the Akensas, but he was detained by some sick persons, to whom it was necessary to administer the Sacraments. On Monday, he was about to say Mass, and to carry the Holy Sacrament to one of those sick persons whom he had confessed the evening before, when the massacre began; a gigantic chief six feet in height, seized him, and having thrown him to the ground, cut off his head with blows of a hatchet. The Father in falling only uttered these words, "Ah, my God! ah, my God!" M. du Codere drew his sword to defend him, when he was himself killed by a musket ball from another Indian whom he did not perceive.

These barbarians spared but two of the French, a tailor and a carpenter, who were able to serve their wants. They did not treat badly either the negro slaves, or the Indians who were willing to give themselves up; but they ripped up the belly of every pregnant woman, and killed almost all those who were nursing their children, because they were disturbed by their cries and tears. They did not kill the other women, but made them their slaves, and treated them with every indignity during the two or three months that they were their masters. The least miserable were those who knew how to sew, because they kept them busy in making shirts, dresses, &c. The others were employed in cutting and carrying wood for cooking, and in pounding the corn of which they make their *sagamité*. But two things, above all, aggravated the grief and hardness of their slavery; it was, in the first place, to have for masters those same persons whom they had

seen dipping their cruel hands in the blood of their husbands; and, in the second place, to hear them continually saying, that the French had been treated in the same manner at all the other posts, and that the country was now entirely freed from them.

During the massacre, the Sun, or the great Chief of the Natchez, was seated quietly under the tobacco shed of the company. His warriors brought to his feet the head of the Commander, about which they ranged those of the principal French of the post, leaving their bodies a prey to the dogs, the buzzards, and other carnivorous birds.

When they were assured that not another Frenchman remained at the post, they applied themselves to plunder the houses, the magazine of the India Company, and all the boats which were still loaded by the bank of the river. They employed the negroes to transport the merchandise, which they divided among themselves, with the exception of the munitions of war, which they placed for security in a separate cabin. While the brandy lasted, of which they found a good supply, they passed their days and nights in drinking, singing, dancing, and insulting in the most barbarous manner, the dead bodies and the memory of the French. The *Tchactas*, and the other Indians being engaged in the plot with them, they felt at their ease, and did not at all fear that they would draw on themselves the vengeance which was merited by their cruelty and perfidy. One night when they were plunged in drunkenness and sleep, Madame Des Noyers wished to make use of the negroes to revenge the death of her husband and the French, but she was betrayed by the person to whom she confided her design, and came very near being burned alive.

Some of the French escaped the fury of the Indians by taking refuge in the woods, where they suffered extremely from hunger and the effects of the weather. One of them, on arriving here, relieved us of a little disquietude we felt with regard to the post

we occupy among the *Yazous*, which is not more than forty or fifty leagues above the Natchez by water, and only from fifteen to twenty by land. Not being able longer to endure the extreme cold from which he suffered, he left the woods under cover of night, to go and warm himself in the house of a Frenchman. When he was near it he heard the voices of Indians, and deliberated whether he should enter. He determined, however, to do so, preferring rather to perish by the hand of these barbarians, than to die of famine and cold. He was agreeably surprised when he found these savages eager to render him a service, to heap kindnesses upon him, to commiserate him, to console him, to furnish him with provisions, clothes, and a boat to make his escape to New Orleans. These were the Yazous, who were returning from chanting the calumet at Oumas. The Chief charged him to say to M. Perrier, that he had nothing to fear on the part of the Yazous, that "they would not lose their spirit," that is, that they would always remain attached to the French, and that he would be constantly on the watch with his tribe, to warn the French boats that were descending the river to be on their guard against the Natchez.

We believed for a long time that the promises of this Chief were very sincere, and feared no more Indian perfidy for our post among the Yazous. But learn, my Reverend Father, the disposition of these Indians, and how little one is able to trust their words, even when accompanied by the greatest demonstrations of friendship. Scarcely had they returned to their own village, when, loaded with the presents they received from the Natchez, they followed their example and imitated their treachery. Uniting with the *Corroys*, they agreed together to exterminate the French. They began with Father Souel,* the missionary of both tribes, who was then living in the midst of them, in their own village.

[* Father Souel was the companion of Father du Poisson, in his "Voyage up the Mississippi."]

The fidelity of the *Ofogoulas*, who were then absent at the chase, has never been shaken, and they now compose one village with the *Tonikas*.

On the 11th of December, Father Souel was returning in the evening from visiting the Chief, and while in a ravine, received many musket-balls, and fell dead on the spot. The Indians immediately rushed to his cabin to plunder it. His negro, who composed all his family and all his defence, armed himself with a wood-cutter's knife, to prevent the pillage, and even wounded one of the savages. This zealous action cost him his life, but, happily, less than a month before he had received baptism, and was living in a most Christian manner.

These Indians, who even to that time had seemed sensible of the affection which their Missionary bore them, reproached themselves for his death as soon as they were capable of reflection; but returning again to their natural ferocity, they adopted the resolution of putting a finishing stroke to their crime by the destruction of the whole French post. "Since the Black Chief is dead," said they, "it is the same as if all the French were dead—let us not spare any."

The next day they executed their barbarous plan. They repaired early in the morning to the fort, which was not more than a league distant, and whose occupants supposed, on their arrival, that the Indians wished to chant the calumet to the Chevalier des Roches, who commanded that post in the absence of M. de Codere. He had but seventeen men with him, who had no suspicion of any evil design on the part of the savages, and were therefore all massacred, not one escaping their fury. They, however, granted their lives to four women and five children, whom they found there, and whom they made slaves.

One of the Yazous having stripped the Missionary, clothed himself in his garments, and shortly after announced to the Natchez, that his nation had redeemed their pledge, and that

the French settled among them were all massacred. In this city there was no longer any doubt on that point, as soon as they learned what came near being the fate of Father Doutreleau. This Missionary had availed himself of the time when the Indians were engaged in their winter occupations, to come and see us, for the purpose of regulating some matters relating to his mission. He set out on the first day of this year, 1730, and not expecting to arrive at the residence of Father Souel, of whose fate he was ignorant, in time to say Mass, he determined to say it at the mouth of the little river of the Yazous, where his party had cabined.

As he was preparing for this sacred office, he saw a boat full of Indians landing. They demanded from them, of what nation they were? "Yazous, comrades of the French," they replied, making a thousand friendly demonstrations to the voyagers who accompanied the Missionary, and presenting them with provisions. While the Father was preparing his altar, a flock of bustards passed, and the voyagers fired at them the only two guns they had, without thinking of reloading, as Mass had already commenced. The Indians noted this, and placed themselves behind the voyagers, as if it was their intention to hear Mass, although they were not Christians.

At the time the Father was saying the *Kyrie Eleison*, the Indians made their discharge. The Missionary perceiving himself wounded in his right arm, and seeing one of the voyagers killed at his feet, and the four others fled, threw himself on his knees to receive the last fatal blow, which he regarded as inevitable. In this posture he received two or three discharges. But although the Indians fired while almost touching him, yet they did not inflict on him any new wounds. Finding himself, then, as it were, miraculously escaped from so many mortal blows, he took to flight, having on still his priestly garments, and without any other defence than an entire confidence in God, whose particular protec-

tion was given him, as the event proved. He threw himself into the water, and after advancing some steps, gained the boat in which two of the voyagers were making their escape. They had supposed him to be killed by some of the many balls which they had heard fired on him. In climbing up into the boat, and turning his head to see whether any one of his pursuers was following him too closely, he received in the mouth a discharge of small shot, the greater part of which were flattened against his teeth, though some of them entered his gums, and remained there for a long time. I have myself seen two of them. Father Doutreleau, all wounded as he was, undertook the duty of steering the boat, while his two companions placed themselves at the oars. Unfortunately one of them, at setting out, had his thigh broken by a musket-ball, from the effects of which he has since remained a cripple.

You may well imagine, my Reverend Father, that the missionary and his companions had no thoughts of ascending the river. They descended the Mississippi with all the speed possible, and at last lost sight of the boat of their enemies, who had pursued them for more than an hour, keeping up a continual fire upon them, and who boasted at the village that they had killed them. The two rowers were often tempted to give themselves up, but encouraged by the missionary, they in their turn made the enemy fear. An old gun which was not loaded, nor in a condition to be, which they pointed at them from time to time, made them often dodge in their boat, and at last obliged them to retire.

As soon as they found themselves freed from their enemies, they dressed their wounds as well as they could, and for the purpose of aiding their flight from that fatal shore, they threw into the river everything they had in their boat, preserving only some pieces of raw bacon for their nourishment.

It had been their intention to stop in passing at the Natches

but having seen that the houses of the French were either demolished or burned, they did not think it advisable to listen to the compliments of the Indians, who from the bank of the river invited them to land. They placed a wide distance between them as soon as possible, and thus shunned the balls which were ineffectually fired at them. It was then that they began to distrust all these Indian nations, and therefore resolved not to go near the land until they reached New Orleans, and supposing that the savages might have rendered themselves masters of it, to descend even to the Balize, where they hoped to find some French vessel provided to receive the wreck of the colony.

In passing the *Tbnikas*, they separated themselves as far as possible from the shore, but they were discovered, and a boat which had been dispatched to reconnoitre them, was not a long time in approaching. Their fear and distrust was renewed, and they did not decide to stop, until they perceived that the persons in that boat spoke very good French, when they overcame their fears, and in the weak state they were, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to land. There they found the little French army which had been formed, the officers compassionate and every way kind, a surgeon and refreshments. After recovering a little from the great dangers and miseries they had endured, they on the next day availed themselves of a boat which had been fitted out for New Orleans.

I cannot express to you, my Reverend Father, the great satisfaction I felt at seeing Father Doutreleau, his arm in a scarf, arrive after a voyage of more than four hundred leagues, all the clothes he had on having been borrowed, except his cassock. My surprise was increased at the recital of his adventures. I placed him immediately in the hands of brother Parisel, who examined his wounds, and who dressed them with great care and speedy success.

The missionary was not yet entirely cured of his wounds,

when he departed to go and act as chaplain to the French army, as he had promised the officers, in accordance with their request. He endured with them the fatigues of the campaign against the Natchez, and there gave new proofs of his zeal, his wisdom, and his courage.

On his return from the Natchez, he came to recruit himself here for six weeks, which he found very long, but which appeared to me very short. He was impatient to return to his dear mission, but it was necessary for me to fit him out generally with every thing proper for a missionary, and he was obliged to wait for the escort which was going to the Illinois. The risks which they ran on the river during this insurrection of the Indians, induced the Commander to forbid voyagers going in separate companies. He set out therefore, on the 16th of April, with many others, in a body sufficiently large to relieve them from all fear of their enemies. I learned in fact that they had proceeded above the Akensas, without any accident.

The pleasure of seeing Father Doutreleau for the first time, and seeing him too after his escape from such imminent perils, was much impaired by the vivid grief I felt for the loss of two missionaries, with whose merit you were as well acquainted as myself. You know that to a most amiable disposition, they united the appropriate qualifications for apostolical men, that they were very much attached to their mission, that they had already become well acquainted with the language of the Indians, that their earliest labors had produced great fruits, and they gave the promise of still greater results, since neither of them was more than thirty-five or thirty-six years of age. This deprivation, which entirely occupied my thoughts, gave me no time for thinking of the loss we had sustained of their negroes and their effects, although it very much deranged a mission which had just been commenced, and whose necessities you know better than any one else.

But nothing has happened to these two excellent missionaries for which we should mourn, or for which they were not prepared when they devoted themselves to the Indian missions in this colony. This disposition alone, independent of every thing else, has without doubt placed a great difference in the eyes of God between their death and that of the others, who have fallen martyrs to the French name. But I am well persuaded, that the fear of a similar fate will not in the least diminish the zeal of those of our Fathers who had thought of following them, neither will it deter our Superiors from responding to the holy desires they may have of sharing our labors.

Knowing, as you do, my Reverend Father, the vigilance and the oversight of our Governor, you can well imagine that he did not sleep in this sad crisis in which we now found ourselves. We may say without flattery, that he surpassed himself by the rapid movements he made, and by the wise measures he adopted to revenge the French blood which had been shed, and to prevent the evils with which almost all the posts of the colony were threatened.

As soon as he was apprised of this unexpected attack by the Natchez Indians, he caused the news to be carried to all the posts, and even as far as the Illinois, not by the direct and ordinary route of the river, which was closed, but on one side by *Natchitoches* and the *Akensas*, and on the other by Mobile and the *Tchicachas*.* He invited the neighbors who were our allies, and particularly the *Tchactas*,† to avenge this perfidy. He furnished arms and ammunition to all the houses of this city and to the plantations. He caused two ships, that is, the Duc de Bourbon and the Alexandre, to ascend the river as far as the *Tonikas*. These ships were like two good fortresses against the insults of the Indians, and in case of attack, two certain asylums for the women and children. He caused a ditch to be dug entirely around the

[* The Chickasaws.] [† The Choctaws.]

city, and placed guard-houses at the four extremities. He organized for its defence many companies of city militia, who mounted guard during the whole night.* As there was more to fear in the grants and in the plantations than in the city, he fortified them with the most care. He had good forts erected at *Chapitoulas*, at *Cannes brûles*, at *Allemands*, at *Bayagoulas*, and at *Pointe Coupée*.

At first, our Governor, listening only to the dictates of his own courage, adopted the design of placing himself at the head of the troops, but it was represented to him, that he ought not to quit New Orleans, where his presence was absolutely necessary, that there was danger of the *Tchactas* determining to fall upon the city, if it should be deprived of its troops; and the negroes, to free themselves from slavery, might join them, as some had done with the Natchez. Moreover he could feel perfectly easy with regard to the conduct of the troops, as the Chevalier de Loubois, with whose experience and bravery he was well acquainted, had been appointed to command them.

Whilst our little army was repairing to the *Tonikas*, seven hundred *Tchactas* mustered, and conducted by M. le Sueur, marched towards the Natchez. We were informed by a party of these people, that the Indians were not at all on their guard, but passed all their nights in dancing. The *Tchactas* took them therefore by surprise, and made a descent on them on the 27th of January, at the break of day. In less than three hours they had delivered fifty-nine persons, both women and children, with the tailor and carpenter, and one hundred and six negroes or negro women with their children; they made eighteen of the

[* As late as 1750, Father Vivier thus describes New Orleans, in a letter: "It is tolerably handsome, the streets are laid out straight, some of the houses are brick and others of wood, and its population consists of French, negroes, and some Indian slaves, who together do not seem to amount, as it appears to me, to more than a thousand or twelve hundred persons.]

Natchez prisoners and took sixty scalps. They would have taken more, if they had not been intent on freeing the slaves, as they had been directed. They had but two men killed and seven or eight wounded. They encamped with their prizes at the grant of St. Catherine, in a mere park enclosed with stakes. The victory would have been complete, if they had waited the arrival of the French army, as had been agreed upon with their deputies.

The Natchez seeing themselves attacked by the formidable *Tchactas*, regarded their defeat as certain, and shutting themselves up in two forts, passed the following nights in dancing their death dance. In their speeches we heard them reproaching the *Tchactas* for their perfidy, in declaring in favor of the French, contrary to the pledge they had given, to unite with them for our destruction.

Three days before this action, the Sieur Mesplex landed at the Natchez with five other Frenchmen. They had volunteered to M. de Loubois, to carry to the Indians negotiations for peace, that they might be able under this pretext to gain information with regard to their force, and their present situation. But in descending from their boat, they encountered a party, who without giving them time to speak, killed three of their men, and made the other three prisoners. The next day they sent one of these prisoners with a letter, in which they demanded as hostages, the Sieur Broutin, who had formerly been Commander among them, and the Chief of the *Tonikas*. Besides, they demanded as the ransom for the women, children, and slaves, two hundred guns, two hundred barrels of powder, two hundred barrels of balls, two thousand gun flints, two hundred knives, two hundred hatchets, two hundred pickaxes, five hogsheads of brandy, twenty casks of wine, twenty barrels of vermilion, two hundred shirts, twenty pieces of limbourg, twenty pieces of cloth, twenty coats with lace on the seams, twenty hats bordered with plumes, and a hundred coats of a plainer kind. Their design was to massacre the French

who should bring these goods. On the very same day, with every refinement in cruelty, their burned the Sieur Mesplex and his companion.

On the 8th of February, the French, with the *Tonikas*, and some other small tribes from the lower end of the Mississippi, arrived at the Natchez, and seized their temple dedicated to the sun.

The impatience and impracticability of the *Tchactas*, who like all these Indians are capable of only striking one blow, and then disperse, the small number of French soldiers who found themselves worn down by fatigues, the want of provisions which the Indians stole from the French, the failure of ammunition with which they were not able to satisfy the *Tchactas*, who wasted one part of it, and placed the other in reserve to be used in hunting, the resistance of the Natchez who were well fortified, and who fought in desperation, all these things decided us to listen to the propositions which the besieged made, after the trenches had been opened for seven days. They threatened, if we persisted in the siege, to burn those of the French who remained, while on the other hand, they offered to restore them, if we would withdraw our seven pieces of cannon. These, in reality, for want of a good gunner, and under present circumstances, were scarcely in a fit state to give them any fear.

These propositions were accepted, and fulfilled on both sides. On the 25th of February the besieged faithfully restored all that they had promised, while the besiegers retired with their cannon to a small fort which they had hastily built on the Escore near the river, for the purpose of always keeping the Natchez in check, and insuring a passage to the voyagers. M. Perrier gave the command of it to M. D'Artaguette, as an acknowledgment of the intrepidity with which, during the seige, he had exposed himself to the greatest dangers, and everywhere braved death.*

[* D'Artaguette, who thus won fame in the Natchez war, and even in

Before the *Tchactas* had determined to fall upon the Natchez, they had been to them to carry the calumet, and were received in a very novel manner. They found them and their horses adorned with chasubles and drapery of the altars, many wore patens about their necks, and drank and gave to drink of brandy in the chalices and the pyx. And the *Tchactas* themselves, when they had gained these articles by pillaging our enemies, renewed this profane sacrilege, by making the same use of our ornaments and sacred vessels in their dances and sports. We were never able to

early youth was looked upon as the pride of Canada, met in after years with a melancholy fate. Appointed to the command of the Illinois, he was summoned in 1736 to lead his braves against the Chickasas from the North, while Bienville attacked them from the South. Accompanied by Father Senat, and by the gallant Vincennes, whose name is borne by the oldest settlement in Indiana, he stole unobserved into the country of the Chickasas, at the head of about fifty French soldiers, and more than a thousand red men. But Bienville had been driven back, and D'Artaguette was obliged to hazard the attack alone. We give the rest of the narrative in the words of Bancroft (*Hist.* iii., p. 367):—One fort was carried, and the Chickasas driven from the cabins it protected; at the second, the intrepid youth was equally successful; on attacking the third fort, he received one wound, and then another, and, in the moment of victory, was disabled. The red men from Illinois, dismayed at the check, fled precipitately. . . . The unhappy D'Artaguette lay weltering in his blood, and by his side fell others of his bravest troops. The Jesuit Senat might have fled: he remained to receive the last sigh of the wounded, regardless of danger, mindful only of duty. Vincennes, too, the Canadian, refused to fly, and shared the captivity of his gallant leader. After the Indian custom, their wounds were stanched; they were received into the cabins of the Chickasas, and feasted bountifully. At last, when Bienville had retreated, the Chickasas brought the captives into a field; and, while one was spared to relate the deed, the adventurous D'Artaguette; the faithful Senat, true to his mission; Vincennes, whose name will be perpetuated as long as the Wabash shall flow by the dwellings of civilized man;—these, with the rest of the captives, were bound to the stake; and neither valor nor piety could save them from death by slow torments and fire."]

recover more than a small portion of them. The greater part of their Chiefs have come here to receive payment for the scalps they have taken, and for the French and negroes whom they have freed. It is necessary for us to buy very dearly their smallest services, and we have scarcely any desire to employ them again, particularly as they have appeared much less brave than the small tribes, who have not made themselves feared by their great number. Every year disease diminishes this nation, which is now reduced to three or four thousand warriors. Since these Indians have shown out their disposition here, we have not been able to endure them longer. They are insolent, ferocious, disgusting, importunate, and insatiable. We compassionate, and at the same time, we admire our Missionaries, that they should renounce all society, to have only that of these barbarians.

I have renewed my acquaintance with *Paatlako*, one of the chiefs, and with a great number of other *Tchactas*. They have made me many interesting visits, and have often repeated to me very nearly the same compliment which they paid me more than a year ago when I left them. "Our hearts and those of our children weep," they said to me, "since we shall not see you more; you were beginning to have the same spirit with us, you listened to us, and we listened to you, you loved us and we loved you: why have you left us? will you not return? come, go with us!" You know, my Reverend Father, that I was not able to yield to their wishes. I therefore merely said that I would come and rejoin them as soon as it was in my power, but that after all, I should be here only in the body, while my heart was with them. "That is good," replied one of these Indians, "but, nevertheless, your heart will say nothing to us, it will give us nothing." Thus it is that everything comes to that point; they do not love us, and do not find us of the same spirit as themselves, except when we are giving them something.

It is true that *Paatlako* has fought with much courage against

the Natchez, and has even received a musket ball in the loins, while to console him for this wound he has had more esteem and friendship shown him than the rest. Scarcely was he seen in his village, when, inflated with these trifling marks of distinction, he said to Father Baudouin, that all New Orleans has been in a wonderful state of alarm on account of his illness, and that M. Perrier had informed the king of his bravery and the great services he had rendered in the last expedition. In these traits I recognize the genius of this nation: it is presumption and vanity itself.

They had abandoned to the *Tchactas* three negroes who had been most unruly, and who had taken the most active part in behalf of the Natchez. They have been burned alive with a degree of cruelty which has inspired all the negroes with a new horror of the Indians, but which will have a beneficial effect in securing the safety of the colony. The *Tonikas* and other smaller tribes have gained some new advantages over the Natchez, and have taken many prisoners, of whom they have burned three women and four men, after having taken their scalps. Our own people, it is said, begin to be accustomed to this barbarous spectacle.

We could not forbear being affected, when we saw arrive in this city, the French women whom the Natchez had made slaves. The miseries which they had suffered were painted on their countenances. But it seems as if they shortly forgot them; at least, many of them were in great haste to marry again, and we are told there were great demonstrations of joy at their weddings.

The little girls, whom none of the inhabitants wish to adopt, have greatly enlarged the interesting company of orphans whom the nuns are bringing up. The great number of these children only serves to increase their charity and attentions. They have formed them into a separate class, and have appointed two special matrons for their care.

There is not one of this holy sisterhood but is delighted at having crossed the ocean, nor do they seek here any other happiness than that of preserving these children in their innocency, and giving a polished and Christian education to these young French, who are in danger of being almost as degraded as the slaves. We may hope, with regard to these holy women, that before the end of the year they will occupy the new mansion which is destined for them, and which they have for so long a time desired. When they shall once be settled there, to the instruction of the boarders, the orphans, the girls who live without, and the negro women, they will add also the care of the sick in the hospital, and a house of refuge for women of questionable character. Perhaps they will even at length be able to aid in affording regularly each year "the retreat" to a large number of females, in accordance with the taste with which we have inspired them.*

So many works of charity would, in France, be sufficient to occupy many associations and different institutions. But what cannot great zeal effect? These different labors do not at all startle seven Ursulines, and by the grace of God they are able to sustain them, without infringing at all on the observance of their religious rules. But for myself, I very much fear, that if some assistance does not arrive, they may sink under the weight of such great fatigues. Those who before they were acquainted with them, said they had come out too soon and in too great a number, have entirely changed their views and their language; witnesses of their edifying conduct and the great services which they render

[* In Europe it is customary for persons at particular seasons to retire for a time from the world, to give themselves up entirely to prayer and meditation. Some part of the season of Lent is generally selected for this purpose, and many, for the sake of more entire seclusion, take up their residence during this time in some religious house. This is called going into "retreat," and is the custom to which Father le Petit here refers.]

to the colony, they find that they have not arrived soon enough, and that there could not come too much of the same virtue and the same merit.

The *Tchikachas*, a brave nation but treacherous, and little known to the French, have endeavored to seduce the Illinois tribes from their allegiance: they have even sounded some particular persons to see whether they could not draw them over to the party of those Indians who were enemies of our nation. The Illinois have replied to them, that they were almost all of the Prayer, (that is, according to their manner of expression, that they are Christians,) and that in other ways they are inviolably attached to the French, by the alliances which many of that nation had contracted with them, in espousing their daughters.

"We always place ourselves," added they, "before the enemies of the French; it is necessary to pass over our bodies to go to them, and to strike us to the heart before a single blow can reach them."

Their conduct is in accordance with this declaration, and has not in the least contradicted their words. At the first news of the war with the Natches and the Yazous, they came hither to weep for the Black Robes and the French, and to offer the services of their nation to M. Perrier, to avenge their death. I happened to be at the Governor's house when they arrived, and was charmed with the speeches they made. *Chikagou*,* whom you saw in Paris, was at the head of the *Mitchigamias*, and *Mamantouensa* at the head of the *Kaskakias*.

Chikagou spoke first. He spread out in the hall a carpet of deer skin, bordered with porcupine quills, on which he placed two calumets, with different Indian ornaments, accompanying them with a present according to the usual custom. "There," said he, in showing these two calumets, "are two messages which

[* Has not this Chief bequeathed his name to a flourishing city of Illinois—*Chicago*?]

we bring you, the one of religion, and the other of peace or war, as you shall determine. We have listened with respect to the Governors, because they bring us the word of the King our Father, and much more to the Black Robes, because they bring us the word of God himself, who is the King of kings. We have come from a great distance to weep with you for the death of the French, and to offer our braves to strike those hostile nations whom you may wish to designate. You have but to speak. When I went over to France, the king promised me his protection for the Prayer, and recommended me never to abandon it. I will always remember it. Grant then your protection to us and to our Black Robes." He then gave utterance to the edifying sentiments with which he was impressed with regard to the Faith, as the interpreter Baillarjou enabled us to half understand them in his miserable French.

Mamantouensa spoke next. His address was short, and in a style widely different from that which is usual among the Indians, who a hundred times repeat the same thing in the same speech.

"There," said he, addressing M. Perrier, "are two young slaves *Padoukas*, some skins, and some other trifles. It is but a small present which I make you; nor is it at all my design to induce you to make me one more costly. All that I ask of you is, your heart and your protection. I am much more desirous of that than of all the merchandise of the world, and when I ask this of you, it is solely for the Prayer. My views of the war are the same as those of *Chikagou*, who has already spoken. It is useless therefore for me to repeat what you have just heard."

Another old Chief, who had the air of an ancient patriarch, then rose. He contented himself with saying, that he wished to die as he had lived, in the Prayer. "The last words," added he, "which our fathers have spoken to us, when they were on

the point of yielding up their latest breath, was to be always attached to the Prayer, and that there is no other way of being happy in this life, and much more in the next which is after death."

M. Perrier, who has the deepest religious feelings, listened with evident pleasure to these Indian speeches. He abandoned himself to the dictates of his own heart, without taking the precaution to have recourse to the evasion and disguises which are often necessary, when one is treating with the generality of Indians. To each speech he made such an answer as good Christians should desire. He declined with thanks their offers of service for the war, since we were sufficiently strong against the enemies who lived at the lower end of the river, but advised them to be on their guard, and to undertake our defence against those who dwelt on the upper part of the same river.

We always felt a distrust of the *Fox* Indians, although they did not longer dare to undertake anything, since Father Guignas has detached from their alliance the tribes of the *Kikapous* and the *Maskoutins*. You know, my Reverend Father, that being in Canada, he had the courage to penetrate even to the *Sioux*, wandering Indians near the source of the Mississippi, at the distance of about eight hundred leagues from New Orleans, and six hundred leagues from Quebec. Obliged to abandon this infant Mission, by the unfortunate result of the enterprise against the *Foxes*, he descended the river to repair to the Illinois. On the 15th of October in the year 1728, he was arrested when half-way by the *Kikapous* and the *Maskoutins*. For five months he was a captive among these Indians, where he had much to suffer and every thing to fear. The time at last came when he was to be burned alive, and he prepared himself to finish his life in this horrible torment, when he was adopted by an old man, whose family saved his life, and procured him his liberty. Our missionaries, who were among the Illinois, were no sooner acquainted

with his sad situation, than they procured him all the alleviations they were able. Everything which he received, he employed to conciliate the Indians, and succeeded even to the extent of engaging them to conduct him to the Illinois, and while there to make peace with the French and the Indians of that region. Seven or eight months after this peace was concluded, the *Maskoutins* and the *Kikapous* returned again to the Illinois country, and took away Father Guignas to spend the winter with them, from whence, in all probability he will return to Canada. He has been exceedingly broken down by these fatiguing journeys, but his zeal, full of fire and activity, seems to give him new strength.

The Illinois had no other residence but with us, during the three weeks they remained in this city. They charmed us by their piety, and by their edifying life. Every evening they recited the chapelet in alternate choirs, and every morning they heard me say Mass; during which, particularly on Sundays and Festival days, they chanted the different prayers of the church suitable to the offices of the day. At the end of the Mass, they never fail to chant, with their whole heart, the prayer for the King. The nuns chanted the first Latin couplet in the ordinary tone of the Gregorian chant, and the Illinois continued the other couplets in their language in the same tone. This spectacle, which was novel, drew great crowds to the church, and inspired a deep devotion. In the course of the day, and after supper, they often chant, either alone or together, different prayers of the church, such as the *Dies Iræ*, *&c.*, *Vexilla Regis*, *&c.*, *Stabat Mater*, *&c.* To listen to them, you would easily perceive that they took more delight and pleasure in chanting these holy canticles, than the generality of the Indians, and even more than the French receive from charting their frivolous and often dissolute songs.

You would be astonished, as I have myself been, on arriving

at this mission, to find that a great number of our French are not, by any means, so well instructed in religion as are these neophytes; they are scarcely unacquainted with any of the histories of the Old and New Testament; the manner in which they hear the holy mass and receive the sacraments, is most excellent; their catechism, which has fallen into my hands, with the literal translation made by Father Le Boullanger, is a perfect model for those who have need of such works in their new missions. They do not leave these good Indians to be ignorant of any of our mysteries, or of our duties, but attach them to the foundation and the essentials of religion, which they have displayed before them in a manner equally instructive and sound.

The first thought which is suggested to those who become acquainted with these Indians, is, that it must have been at great cost of labor to the missionaries, and that it will be still more so, to form them into any kind of Christianity. But their assiduity and patience is abundantly recompensed by the blessings which it has pleased God to pour out upon their labors. The Father Le Boullanger has written me word, that he is obliged, for the second time, considerably to enlarge his church, on account of the great number of Indians who each year have received baptism.

The first time that the Illinois saw the nuns, *Mamantouensa*, perceiving before them a troop of little girls, remarked—"I see, indeed, that you are not nuns without an object." He wished to say, that they were not mere solitaries, laboring only for their own perfection. "You are," he added, "like the Black Robes, our Fathers; you labor for others. Ah! if we had above there two or three of your number, our wives and daughters would have more wit, and would be better Christians." "Ah, well!" the Mother Superior answered him, "choose those whom you wish." "It is not for me to choose," said *Mamantouensa*, "it is for you who know them. The choice should fall on those who are most attached to God, and who love him most."

You may well imagine, my Reverend Father, how much these holy females were charmed to find in an Indian, sentiments so reasonable and Christian-like. Alas! it will take time and pains to teach the *Tchactas* to think and speak in this way. This indeed can only be the work of Him, who knows how, when it pleases Him, to change the stones into children of Abraham.

Chikagou gaurds most carefully, in a bag made expressly for the purpose, the magnificent snuff-box which the late Madame, the Duchess d'Orleans, gave him at Versailles. Notwithstanding all the offers made to him, he has never been willing to part with it, a degree of consideration very remarkable in an Indian, whose characteristic generally is, to be in a short time disgusted with anything he has, and passionately desire whatever he sees, but does not own.

Everything which *Chikagou* has related to his countrymen, with regard to France, has appeared to them incredible. "They have bribed you," said some to him, "to make us believe all these beautiful fictions." "We are willing to believe," said his relatives, and those by whom his sincerity was least suspected, "that you have really seen all that you tell us, but there must have been some charm which fascinated your eyes, for it is not possible that France can be such as you have painted it." When he told them that in France they were accustomed to have five cabins, one on top of the other, and that they were as high as the tallest trees, that there were as many people in the streets of Paris, as there were blades of grass on the prairies, or musquitoes in the woods, and that they rode about there, and even made long journeys in moving cabins of leather, they did not credit it any more than when he added that he had seen long cabins full of sick people, where skilful surgeons performed the most wonderful cures. "Hear!" he would say to them in sport, "you may lose an arm, a leg, an eye, a tooth, a breast, if you are in France, and they will supply you with others, so that it will not be noticed."

What most embarrassed *Mamantouensa*, when he saw the ships, was to know how it was possible to launch them into the water after they had been built on land, where arms enough could be found for this purpose, and above all to raise the anchors with their enormous weights. They explained both these points to him, and he admired the genius of the French who were capable of such beautiful inventions.

The Illinois departed on the last day of June; they were to unite with the *Akensas*, for the purpose of falling on the *Yazous* and on the *Corroys*. These last having set out on their retreat to the *Tchikasas*, whither they were carrying the French scalps they had taken, were met on the way by the *Tchatchousmas* and by some *Tchactas*, who in their contest with them took eighteen scalps and delivered some French women with their children. Some time afterwards, they were again attacked by a party of the *Akensas*, who took from them four scalps, and made many of their women prisoners. These good Indians encountered on their return two boats of French hunters; they passed their hands over them from head to foot, according to their custom, in testifying their sorrow for the death of the French, and of their Father in Jesus Christ. They made a solemn oath, that while one *Akensa* should be remaining in the world, the Natchez and the Yazous should never be without an enemy. They showed a bell and some books, which they were taking home, they said, for the first Black Chief who should come to their village. These were all that they had found in the cabin of Father Souel.

I was in pain to learn what these barbarians had done with the body of this missionary, but a French woman who was then their slave, has informed me, that she at last induced them to give it burial. "I saw him," she would often say to me, "lying on his back in the canes very near his house; they had not taken from him anything but his cassock. Although he had been dead fifteen days,

his skin was still as white, and his cheeks as red as if he were merely sleeping. I was tempted to examine where he had received the fatal blow, but respect stopped my curiosity; I placed myself a moment at his knees, and have brought away his handkerchief which was near him."

The faithful *Akensas* mourned every day in their village the death of Father du Poisson, and with the most earnest entreaties, demanded another missionary. We could not excuse ourselves from granting this request to a nation so amiable, and at all times so attached to the French, possessing too a degree of modesty of which the other nations were ignorant, and among whom there exists no peculiar obstacle to Christianity, except their extreme attachment to jugglery.

But we have endeavored, my Reverend Father, to console ourselves in our grief with an argument of which you would never think. It is, that we may congratulate ourselves our loss has not been more general. In fact, the two dear missionaries for whom we mourn, did not appear to be by any means as much exposed to the cruelty of the Indians as are many others, particularly Father de Guyenne, and still more Father Baudouin.

The latter is without any defence in the midst of the great nation of the *Tchactas*. We have always had a great distrust of these Indians, even at the time when they were making war for us upon the Natchez. Now they have become so inflated with their pretended victory, that we have much more need of troops to repress their insolence, and to keep them in their duty, than to finish the destruction of our open enemies.

Father de Guyenne, after much opposition on the part of the Indians in the neighborhood of Carolina, succeeded in building two cabins in two different villages, to be near at hand to learn their language and to instruct them; but they were both demolished. He will be obliged at last to confine his zeal to the

French fort of the *Alibamons*, or to seek a more abundant harvest on the banks of the Mississippi.

It only remains, my Reverend Father, to inform you of the situation of our enemies. They are united near the river of the *Ouachitas*, on which they have three forts. We believe that the *Natchez* are as yet in number about five hundred warriors, without counting their women and children; they were scarcely more than seven hundred before the war. Among the *Yazous* and the *Corroys* there are not more than forty warriors. They have planted their corn between two little rivers which run near their forts. It would only be necessary to cut off this corn, to starve them during the winter, but the thing is not easy to effect, from what the smaller tribes inform us, who harass them continually. The country is cut up by *Bayouks*,* and filled with cane-brakes, where the inconceivable quantity of musquitoes would not permit an ambuscade to be established for any length of time.

The Natchez, who were shut up in their forts since the last expedition, have begun again to show themselves. Incensed that a party from *Oumas* and *Bayagoulas* had captured one of their boats, in which were seven men, a woman, and two children, they went in great numbers near a small fort, where they have surprised ten Frenchmen and twenty negroes. There was but one small soldier with two negroes who were able to save themselves. He had formerly escaped the massacre made by the Natchez by concealing himself in an oven, and this time he escaped by hiding in the trunk of a tree.

You can well believe, my Reverend Father, that this war has retarded the French colony; nevertheless, we flatter ourselves that this misfortune will be productive of benefit, by determining the Court to send the forces necessary to tranquillize the colony and render it flourishing. Although they have nothing to fear at New Orleans, either from the smaller neighboring tribes,

[* A *bayou* is a water-course connecting the lakes or rivers.]

whom our negroes alone could finish in a single morning, or even from the *Tchactas*, who would not dare to expose themselves on the lake in any great numbers, yet a panic terror has spread itself over almost every spirit, particularly with the females. They will, however, be reassured by the arrival of the first troops from France, whom we are now constantly expecting. As far as our missionaries are concerned, they are very tranquil. The perils to which they see themselves exposed seem to increase their joy and animate their zeal. Be mindful then of them and of me in your holy prayers, in the union with which I am with respect, &c.

[It may, perhaps, interest the reader to know the future history of the Natchez. They had fled across the Mississippi, and erected their fortifications about 180 miles up the Red River. Here the letter of Father le Petit leaves them. The French, having obtained a reinforcement, pursued them, attacked them in their fort, and after a sanguinary struggle, obliged them to surrender at discretion. Their women and children were reduced to slavery, and compelled to work in the plantations. Of the surviving warriors, some fled still farther to the West, some remained with the Chickasas, and others found a shelter among the Muskhogees, among whom their ancient language is still preserved. The Great Sun and more than four hundred prisoners were shipped to Hispaniola, and sold as slaves. Thus perished the tribe of the Natchez.]

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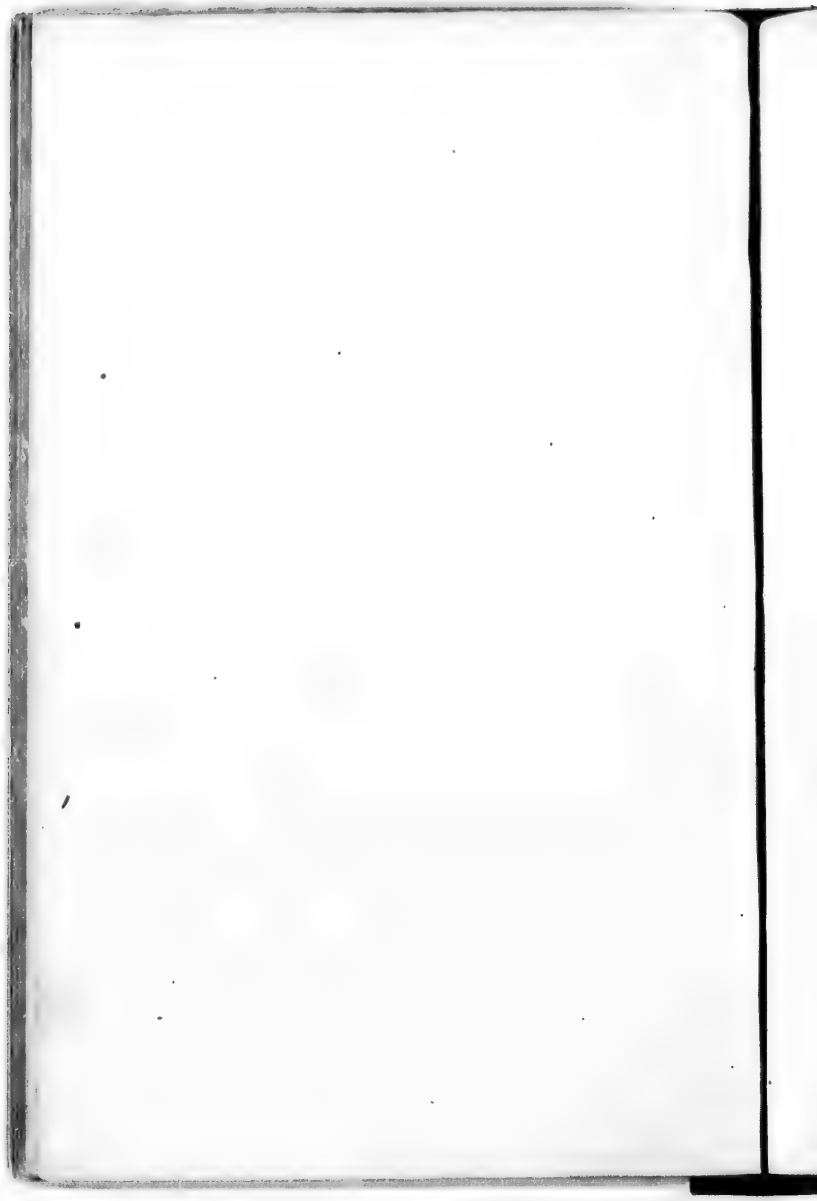
MISSION TO THE ILLINOIS.

1750.



LETTER XI.

FROM FATHER VIVIER, OF THE COMPANY OF JESUS, TO A FATHER OF THE SAME COMPANY.

At Illinois, the 17th of November, 1750.

MY REVEREND FATHER,

The Peace of our Lord be with you:

I ACCEPT with pleasure the proposition which you make. The slight merit that I can acquire by my labors I willingly consent to share with you, in the assurance which you give, that you will aid me with your holy prayers. I gain too much by this association not to enter into it with all my heart.

Another point which you desire, and on which I am going to satisfy you, is the detail of our Missions. We have three stations in this part of the world, one of Indians, one of French, and a third composed partly of French and partly of Indians.

The first contains more than six hundred Illinois, all baptised with the exception of five or six; but the "fire water" which is sold them by the French, and especially by the soldiers, in spite of the reiterated prohibitions on the part of the king, and that which is sometimes distributed to them, under pretext of maintaining them in our interests, has ruined that Mission, and caused the greater part of its converts to abandon our holy religion. The Indian, and particularly the Illinois, who at other times are the gentlest and most tractable of men, become when intoxicated, frantic and brutally ferocious. Then, they attack each other with their knives, inflicting terrible wounds. Some have lost their ears, and others a part of the nose, in these tragi-

cal scenes. The greatest good that we do among them, is the administration of baptism to children who are at the point of death. It is at this station that I have my ordinary residence with Father Guienne, who acts as my instructor in the study of the Illinois language.

The French Cure where Father Vattrin labors, is composed of more than four hundred French of every age, and more than two hundred and fifty negroes. The third Mission, seventy leagues from here, is much smaller; it is under the charge of Father Meurin. The rest of our Mission in Louisiana consists of a residence at New Orleans, where the Superior General of the Mission lives, together with one of the Fathers, and two Lay-Brethren. We have there a large plantation, which is now in a good condition. It is from the revenues of this plantation, together with their pensions from the king, that the wants of the Missionaries are supplied.

When the Mission is sufficiently provided with laborers, (and in this colony they ought to be at least twelve in number,) we must establish one among the Akansas, another among the Tchactas, and a third among the Alibamons. The Reverend Father Baudouin, the actual Superior General of the Mission, resided formerly among the Tchactas; he remained for eighteen years among these savages. When he was on the point of reaping some fruits from his labors, the troubles which the English excited in that nation, and the peril to which he was evidently exposed, obliged Father Vitri, then Superior General, in concert with the Governor, to recall him to New Orleans. Now that these difficulties begin to abate, they think of re-establishing the Mission. Father Moran has been for some years among the Alibamons. The impossibility however of exercising his ministry there, for the benefit either of the Indians or French, has induced the Superior to recall him, that he might be entrusted with the direction of the Nuns and of the Royal Hospital which is now under our charge.

The English trade, as well as the French, among the Alibamon Indians. You can easily imagine what an obstacle this presents to the progress of Religion, for the English are always ready to excite controversy. Among the Akansas we have now actually no one, were those poor savages in a state to make any choice on this subject. Such, my Reverend Father, is the state of our Mission. The rest of my letter will be taken up with a short description of the country.*

* * * * * *

On ascending the Mississippi, we find French settlements above New Orleans as well as below. The largest of these is a little colony originally founded by Germans, (*Allemands*) at ten leagues distance from the city. Pointe Coupée is thirty-five leagues from the Germans; they have constructed there a fort of pine, in which a small garrison is maintained. On the western bank of the river, we can count sixty settlements in a space of five or six leagues. Fifty leagues from Pointe Coupée is Natchez; here we have scarcely more than a garrison imprisoned, so to speak, in a fort, through fear of the *Chicachats* and other hostile Indians. There were formerly as many as sixty dwellings at this point, and a powerful Indian tribe by the name of the Natchez, who were much attached to us, and from whom we received important services; but the tyranny which a French Commander exercised towards them, drove them to extremities. In one single day they put all the French to the sword, with the exception of a few who managed to escape. One of our Fathers who was descending the Mississippi, and who was induced to remain for the purpose of

[* We omit the greater part of this letter, because the descriptions of the Illinois country are but a repetition of those given by Father Marest in the former letter. The parts we have selected are interesting, as showing the state in 1750 of those missions and settlements of which Fathers du Poisson and le Petit gave an account more than twenty years before. This letter, therefore, furnishes a fit conclusion to their narratives.]

saying Mass on Sunday, was involved in the destruction. Since then we have avenged this blow by the almost total annihilation of the Natchez tribe. There remain but a few of them scattered among the *Chicachats* and the *Chéraquis*, where their situation is as precarious as that of slaves.

* * * * * *

A hundred leagues above the Natchez are the Akansas, an Indian tribe of about four hundred warriors. We have near them a garrisoned fort, to furnish succors to the convoys which are ascending to the Illinois country. At this place there were formerly some settlers, but in the month of May, 1748, the *Chicachats*, our irreconcilable enemies, aided by other savage tribes, attacked this post suddenly, killed several persons, and led thirteen away captive. The rest took refuge in the fort, which contained at that time not more than a dozen soldiers. They made a show of attacking it, but had not lost more than two men when they beat a retreat. Their drummer was a French deserter from this same garrison at the Akansas.

The distance from the Akansas to the Illinois is nearly one hundred and fifty leagues; through all that extent of country there is not a single settlement. Nevertheless, to ensure us its possession, it would be well if we had a good fort upon the *Ouabache*,* the only place where the English can enter the Mississippi.

* * * * * *

There are in this part of Louisiana† five French villages, and three belonging to the Illinois, in a space of twenty-two leagues, situated on an extensive prairie, bounded at the east by a chain of mountains, and the river of the Tamarouas, and at the west by the Mississippi. These five French villages contain about one

[* The Ohio river.]

[† Father Vivier is here speaking of the country now called Illinois. The name of Louisiana seems then to have been given to the whole West.]

hundred and forty families. The three Indian villages can furnish three hundred men capable of bearing arms.

* * * * * *

At the north and north-west, the country is unlimited in extent. It comprises that immense tract watered by the Missouri and its tributary streams, the most beautiful region in the world. What a field do these Indian tribes offer for the zeal of the missionary! They belong to the district of the priests of the Foreign Missions, to whom for several years past the Bishop of Quebec has given them in charge. There are three of these priests here, who have charge of the two French Cures; nothing can be more lovely than their character, or more edifying than their conduct. We live with them as if we were members of the same fraternity.

Among the tribes in Missouri, there are some who seem most favorably disposed for the reception of the Gospel; for example, the *Panismahas*. One of the priests of whom I have just spoken, wrote one day to a Frenchman who was trading with these Indians, and begged him in his letter to baptize those of their children whom he found at the point of death. The Chief of the village seeing the letter, asked, "What is the news?" "None," answered the Frenchman. "What!" said the Indian, "because we are red men, may we not know the news?" "It is from the Black Chief," replied the Frenchman, "he has written advising me to baptize the children who are dying, so that they may go to the Great Spirit." The Indian Chief, perfectly satisfied, said to him, "Do not put yourself to any trouble in this matter, I will take upon myself the task of giving you notice whenever there shall be a child in danger." He assembled his people: "What do you think," said he to them, "of this Black Chief?" (for it is thus that they call the missionaries,) "we have never seen him, we have never done him any service, he dwells far from us towards the rising of the sun, and yet he thinks of our village;

he wishes to do us good, and when our children come to die, he wishes to send them to the Great Spirit; this Black Chief must be very good."

Some merchants who came from his village, told me of traits which prove, that though a savage, he is not wanting in wit or good sense. At the death of his predecessor, the votes of his tribe were unanimously given in his favor. He at first excused himself from accepting the rank of Chief, but at last, being constrained to acquiesce, "You wish, then," said he, "that I should be your Chief; I consent to it, but know that I will be in reality Chief, and in this capacity will exact implicit obedience. Hitherto the widows and orphans have been much neglected; I require that in future their wants shall be provided for; and in order that they may never be forgotten, I require that they shall receive the first share." He therefore ordered his *Escapia*, who is his steward, whenever they went to the chase, to reserve a quantity of food sufficient for the widows and orphans.

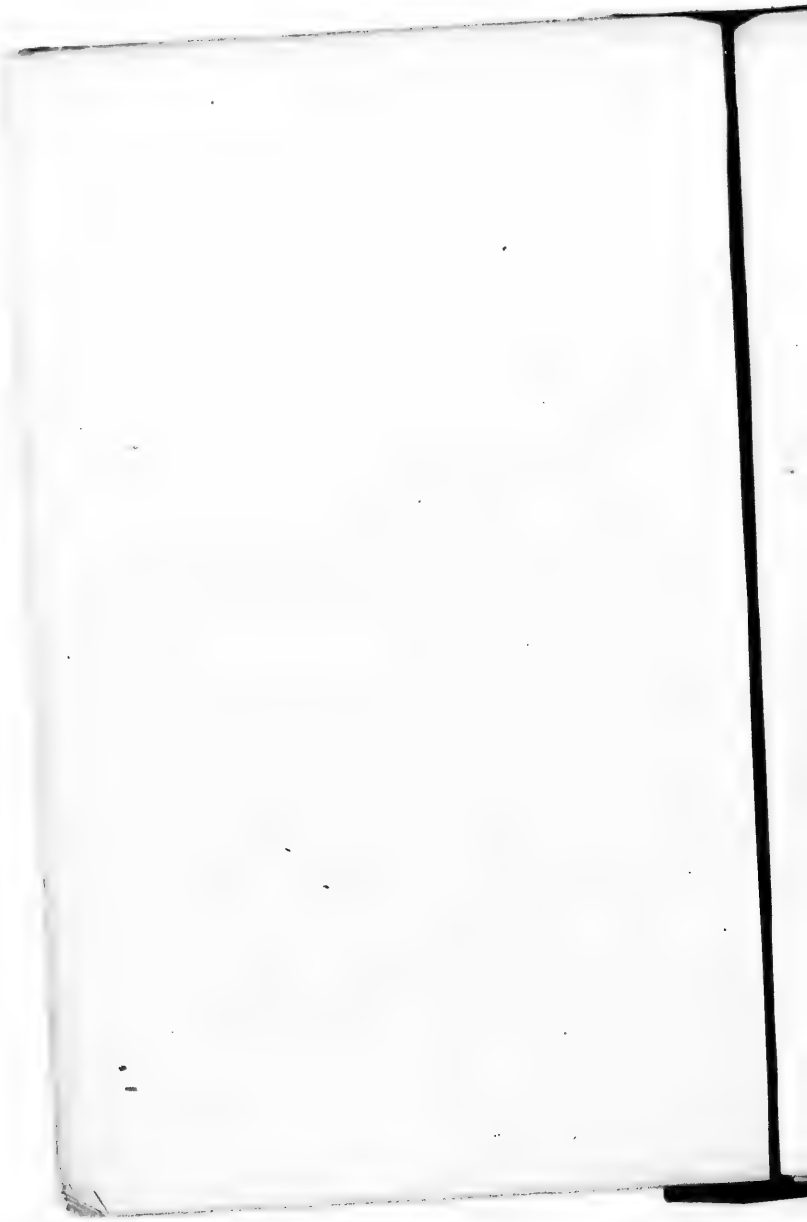
These people have as yet but few guns among them. They hunt on horseback with arrows and lances. They surround a herd of buffaloes, and but few of them escape. The animals being brought down, the *Escapia* of the Chief lays his hand on a certain number of them, which form the portion of the widows and orphans, and no one is permitted to touch any of them. One of the hunters having, inadvertently without doubt, commenced cutting from this portion, the Chief killed him on the spot with his gun.

This Chief receives the French with great distinction. He does not permit them to eat except with himself, or with some Chief of a strange tribe, if he happens to meet with any. He honors with the title of the *Sun* the most despicable of the French who find their way to his village, and therefore says, that the sky is always clear as long as the French remain there. A month ago he came to salute our Commander, and I went to the fort of

Chartres, six leagues from hence, on purpose to see him. I found him to be an exceedingly handsome man. He treated me with great politeness, and invited me to go and give the spirit to his people, that is to say, to instruct them. His village, according to the report of the French who have been there, can furnish nine hundred men capable of bearing arms.

In conclusion, I would remark, that this country is of much greater importance than is commonly supposed. From its situation alone it is well that France should spare no pains to preserve it. It is true that it has not yet enriched the coffers of the King, and that it is expensive to defend it; but it is not less true that the tranquillity of Canada and the safety of the whole lower colony depend on it. Certainly without this post, there would be no land communication between Louisiana and Canada. Another consideration is, that many parts of Canada, and all those below the river, would be deprived of the provisions which are brought from the Illinois, and which are often their chief dependence. By establishing here a permanent settlement, the King would prevent all these inconveniences, and would confirm himself in the possession of the most extensive and most beautiful country in Northern America. To be entirely convinced of this, he has only to cast his eyes on the map of Louisiana, to consider the situation of the Illinois, and the multitude of tribes to whom this post would serve as a barrier.

I am, in the communion of our holy faith, &c



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